Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-EIGHT • NUMBER SIX • DECEMBER 1994

WHAT TO DO ABOUT WELFARE

Charles Murray

The Peace Process So Far / Norman Podhoretz

Countercultures / Irving Kristol

Redford's Van Doren & Mine / Joseph Epstein

Eurocentrism Revisited / Bernard Lewis

Buddies — A Story / Felicia Ackerman

U.S. Troops on the Golan? A Special Report

Global Activism: An Exchange between Robert Kagan and:

Elliott Abrams / Angelo M. Codevilla / Aaron L. Friedberg / Francis Fukuyama / Fred Charles Iklé
Joshua Muravchik / Peter W. Rodman / Helmut Sonnenfeldt / Paul Wolfowitz / Fareed Zakaria

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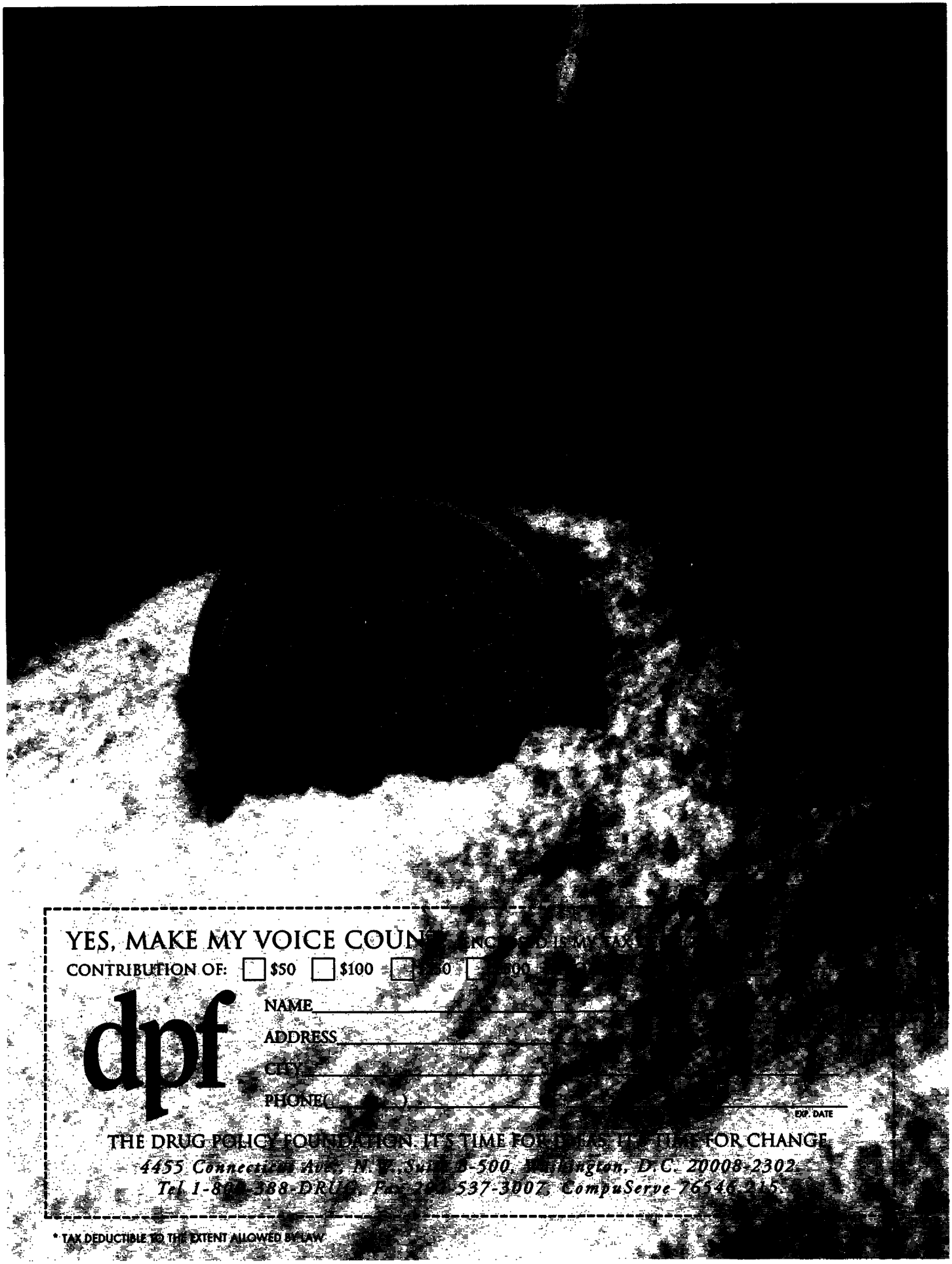

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COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022 Telephone: (212) 751-4000 FAX: (212) 751-1174. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Single copy is $3.75; $39 a year, 2 years $72, 3 years $105—Add $8.00 per year for all foreign subscriptions, including Canada and Latin America. For subscription information call: (800) 829-6270—Second-class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022. Copyright © 1994 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Reader's Guide, Book Review Digest,* and elsewhere—Available in reference systems produced by University Microfilms International (800-521-0600) and Information Access Company (800-227-8431)—U.S. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors Inc., 1130 Cleveland Rd., Sandusky, OH 44870. Printed in the U.S.A.

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Global Activism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Kagan's excellent survey of 20th-century American foreign policy ["The Case for Global Activism," September] presents an accurate picture of the dangers the country will face if it now attempts to withdraw from world politics. Mr. Kagan, however, underestimates the significance of one phenomenon whose role he does mention. "Americans did not shun international involvement in the interwar years," he writes. "Rather, they tried to enjoy the benefits of such involvement while hoping to avoid its inevitable costs."

I would suggest that this effort to avoid paying the "inevitable costs" of intervention, which started long before the cold war, has been especially visible since it began. Thus did the electorate throw the Democrats out of the White House when the Republican candidate in 1952 promised to end the Korean war, and when the Republican in 1968 promised to end American involvement in the war in Vietnam. Thus did the "Nixon Doctrine" suggest that with proxies like the Shah of Iran American security could be protected without sending any more boys overseas, and the "Reagan Doctrine" tried to do the job with proxy guerrilla armies.

Why did these internationalist Presidents feel the need to avoid American casualties? Because they understood that the American people were willing to go along with an interventionist foreign policy only so long as the cost was low. Several of Mr. Kagan's examples—Panama and Grenada are the most striking—demonstrate only that any military action will gain public support if it is announced when it is, in essence, over. Public reaction to the deaths of American Marines in Lebanon and Rangers later in Somalia suggests that the Presidents who postulated a low public tolerance for the shedding of American blood were not far off the mark.

Or, to be more precise, they were not far off the mark when it came to American casualties incurred in actions apparently peripheral to the national interest. I believe there would have been considerable tolerance for casualties in the Gulf war, for most Americans came to be persuaded that that battle involved key American political and economic interests.

Here there are two points worth remembering. First, American interests in each potential intervention need to be explained and people need to be persuaded. This calls for presidential leadership, and strong leadership can expand the public's willingness to intervene overseas. An administration that cannot seem to make up its mind what America's interests are, and where they require military action, will never persuade a reluctant public to support action that may cause American deaths.

Second, while Mr. Kagan is right to argue for American "confidence and determination" and to defend the proposition that early action will often prevent much more bloodshed later, some matters are truly peripheral to American national-security interests. Acting to prevent nuclear proliferation is one thing; sending troops on "nation-building" missions whenever there is a humanitarian crisis is another. Intervention in the Caribbean, where American interests have been clear since this country was founded, is a lot easier to defend than intervention in areas where American economic and political interests are nonexistent.

Mr. Kagan is right to push the pendulum back now toward American involvement in world affairs. He should, however, acknowledge that it can swing too far in that direction. Intervention when American national interests are not at stake—when United Nations resolutions become a substitute for the careful calculation of where tangible and intangible U.S. interests lie—will eventually undercut the willingness of Americans to meet even essential national responsibilities.

ELLIOTT ABRAMS
Washington, D.C.

[*Mr. Abrams served as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from 1985 to 1989. He is currently with the Hudson Institute.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Kagan tries to make the case not for intervening here rath-

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er than there, in this or that circumstance, to do this or that, but for intervening as opposed to not doing so. Mission: impossible. The core of his argument is that refusal to exercise power anywhere becomes habitual, and debilitates the country's capacity for self-defense even in the most obvious cases. In fact, however, leaders who commit lives and treasure unwisely debilitate the country's capacity for self-defense even more directly. So the case for any action must be made in terms relevant to that action. Mr. Kagan's argument has two corollaries: "The big threats and vital interests" are "no less debatable than the small and lesser interests," and it is not really necessary to tie the use of force to narrowly defined security interests. It is difficult to imagine a more direct incitement to irresponsibility.

Mr. Kagan is correct that great power and widespread interests imply much responsibility. But because his reading of history turns up no case of unwise intervention or wise restraint, he does not help us distinguish worthwhile actions from errors. That reading of history is debatable, at the very least.

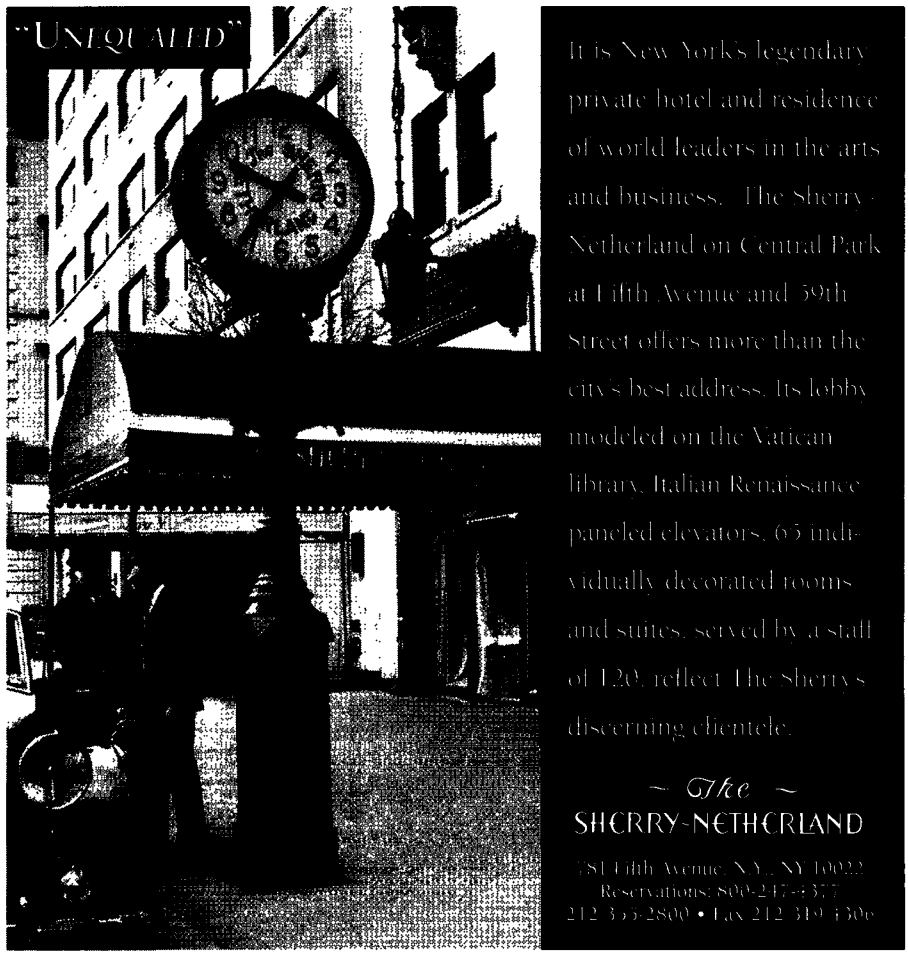
Mr. Kagan says that the U.S. had to enter World War I to preserve a benign British-dominated world order against the possibility of a German-dominated one. But in 1917 the world's order was not at stake because neither side could have won a lopsided victory. Such a victory became possible only when the United States entered the war. The results of World War I are indefensible. If the U.S. had not intervened, the seeds of World War II would not have been sown, and the American people would have faced later developments without the burden of their understandable reaction to 126,000 lives having been thrown away.

The very concept of "intervention" beclouds the real questions: For what purpose should we kill and die? Is *this* purpose worthy? What do we have to do to achieve it? Will the results be worth the effort? Are we willing and able to do what it takes? Mr. Kagan discounts the necessity of clear objectives clearly related to the means to be employed. But the concatenation of ends and means is the very essence of policy. Our intervention in Vietnam was the very negation of policy. In the name of noble purposes, the U.S. government disrupted tens of millions of lives, and spent hundreds of billions of dollars. But our leaders thought that the enemies were hunger and disease, and were full of contempt for the idea of victory. By similar lights, the U.S. government dispatched Marines to Beirut in 1982 and a variety of troops to Somalia in 1992. These troops had no enemy to defeat—only blood to shed. By contrast, consider the common sense of Douglas MacArthur's paraphrase of Aristotle: in war there is no substitute for victory.

Consider also that, willy-nilly, to use force is to assume responsibility for the outcome. The U.S. government decided to intervene against Iraq to remove Iraq as a threat to the Gulf states. But since Iraq is an empire, to break the power of the regime is to dismember the country. The U.S. government seemed to realize this only when the defeated Iraqi army's disarray was making it happen. Unwilling to take responsibility for victory, the U.S. government then acted to ensure the survival of Saddam's regime. Now America's bolt is shot, and Saddam's power looms over the region. So, because blather about a new world order helped U.S. officials forget the fundamentals, our mighty war machine killed tens of thousands of people whose death made no difference, while sparing a few whose death would have accomplished our long-range purposes.

The real lesson of history is that any attempt to establish a "world order" is chimerical. The best we can do is to follow the example of the Founding Fathers, pay attention to the fundamentals, and let the world order take care of itself. The Monroe Doctrine, which puts friendly borders at the top of our priorities, makes as much sense today as it did 170 years ago. As ever, our location amid oceans is a source either of security or insecurity depending on the capacity of our Navy to control them. To the extent that any mission weakens our Navy's supremacy in mid-ocean, it is a potentially fatal diversion. Equally important in our time is defense of the air-and-space approaches to our country against aircraft and missiles.

It is very important to us that the Western Pacific rim and Atlantic Europe be friendly, or at least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not under the influence of major enemies of ours. But guaranteeing that was, is, and always will be beyond us. Control of the ocean and of space is the one factor bearing on such friendship that we can come closest to guaranteeing. Our air and ground forces can never make more than a contribution to big battles in Europe or Asia. Because we cannot make a future for ourselves on the land mass of Eurasia, only lose it, we should never try to substitute ourselves for shaky allies. Which country may be willing to do what for us depends primarily on our power. Hence it behooves U.S. officials to husband that power.

Lest we cease to be ourselves, we must always and everywhere be on the side of those who believe that "all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. . . ." But prudence rather than principle must dictate what, if anything, we do about it. Who among us is willing to impose civilization on the Somalis or Rwandans? Are we willing to police the streets of Sarajevo? On the other hand, there is every reason to call the Milosevics of this world the names they deserve. One might make a case for putting cruise missiles into their bedrooms. A case can be made for guaranteeing Poland *et al.* against eventual Russian aggression. The case for making war to destroy North Korea's nuclear arsenal and regime—and thus to preserve the current orientation of Japan—is clear enough to me. But remember, if the U.S. government does any of these things, all of us who must bear the consequences must decide. The Constitution specifies how: Congress must vote on a declaration of war. The debate should clarify the relationship between ends and means.

Mr. Kagan asks, "Who among us . . . is prepared to rise to the challenge of global activism?" I would ask in turn: who among those who pretend to lead the United States in the world is prepared to serve in the armed forces and submit his body to the blood tax? Today only one-third of Congressmen and fewer than a tenth of executive appointees, professors, journalists, and executives of major corporations have ever served in the armed forces. Nor do their families serve. Nor, by and large, are they personally acquainted with those who do. There is a great and growing gap between those sectors of society that contribute to the armed forces and those whose personal remoteness emboldens them to play global chess.

Finally, leadership requires a little humility. Mr. Kagan writes that "Victory in the cold war came when Republicans. . . ." I wish! In fact, it came with the declaration of independence by the Baltic Republics on August 25, 1991, just three weeks after George Bush, culminating a long and increasingly lonely effort to help Gorbachev save the Soviet Union, told the Ukrainian people to be good little Soviet citizens. Today, U.S. global activism means, in part, giving smoke-and-mirrors guarantees to the Ukrainians to induce them to render themselves naked to Russian nuclear blackmail. It means helping to weaken the northern border of Israel, and then guaranteeing it. And it means a lot of other silly things, like invading Haiti.

In sum, it is easy to make the case for going to war where we should, for worthy purposes, in well-calculated ways, and under wise leadership. And it is just as easy to make the case against the wrong wars in the wrong places, for the wrong purposes, badly waged. The trick is to tell the difference.

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA
Stanford, California

[*Mr. Codevilla, formerly a professional staff member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, is a fellow of the Hoover Institution.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Like the realists with whom he takes issue in his thoughtful and provocative essay, Robert Kagan seeks to ensure that, in the wake of the cold war, the United States will continue to play the part of a world power. But, where the realists urge modesty in the selection of ends and caution and discrimination in the application of means, Mr. Kagan prefers boldness and "global activism." As it has done throughout this century, he argues, the United States must use "its influence to promote a world order consistent with its material needs and philosophical predilections."

Mr. Kagan is surely right that an excessively narrow definition of the nation's interests, and undue timidity in the application of its power, will increase the likelihood of paralysis, disengagement, and the eventual emergence of fundamental new threats. Given the nature of its domestic regime, America cannot be concerned only with the preservation of its physical security; if it tries to be a "traditional" power, it will end up by not being much of a power at all. Moreover, as Mr. Kagan reminds us, great-power status is a state of mind as well as the product of a mere accumulation of material resources. Once unlearned, the habits of engagement and action may not be so easy to reacquire. Having defeated its long-time foe, the United States should therefore set itself appropriately ambitious goals and act in ways intended to achieve them. But there are serious difficulties and dangers with the course that Mr. Kagan appears to be proposing.

To begin with, he is overly optimistic (and, yes, unrealistic) in his assessment of American power. One need not accept the notion that the United States is in a state of terminal decline to recognize that, despite our continuing preponderance in most important measures of capability, our relative power *has* diminished in recent decades and is likely to decline still further in the years immediately ahead. The margin of U.S. economic, technological, and, in some respects (such as the more widespread possession of nuclear weapons), military advantage over all other nations will not be as great at the end of this century as it was at its midpoint. Not surprisingly, our capacity to remake the world in our own image will also be diminished. Whether or not God truly does look after "children, drunkards, and the United States," for most of the past century the rising curve of American power has helped to compensate for a multitude of strategic sins and blunders. In the 21st century the diffusion of capabilities will impose greater burdens on our collective capacity for strategic thought and action.

Even if the U.S. share of world-power resources were to remain unchanged, the character of many of the situations that matter most to our future security will make them highly resistant to our influence (or to any other outsider's for that matter). Whether militant Islamic fundamentalism spreads and becomes more virulent, for ex-

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ample, or Russia and China become more liberal and democratic (and presumably peaceful) are matters of enormous importance, but they are also beyond our capacity for direct control. These observations should not be taken as an argument for fatalism or passivity. There is every reason for the United States to try to propagate its values and to do what it can to mold the post-cold-war international order; but good reason, too, for being restrained in our expectations of what we can achieve.

Regarding means: Mr. Kagan places a great deal of emphasis on the use of American military power. Indeed, at times, his "global activism" appears to consist of little more than a willingness to intervene in a series of what realists are inclined to regard as "peripheral" conflicts. Although armed force will surely remain an important tool of American foreign policy, it would be a mistake to concentrate every ounce of analytical energy on only one of the instruments at our disposal. With the end of the cold war, the utility of everything from foreign aid to covert operations needs to be reexamined.

Moreover, if only because the number of potential trouble spots is likely to increase, while the old constraints on American action remain low, the need for discrimination in the future will be even greater than in the past. Saying, in effect, that we ought to be willing to "bear any burden and oppose any foe" does not get us very far in sorting out the costs, benefits, and risks of military action, or inaction, in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Cuba, the Persian Gulf, the South China Sea, the Baltic, and so on.

What we need are not ironclad rules ("avoid the periphery" or "intervene everywhere"), but better and clearer ways of analyzing and debating each new situation as it arises. Every conflict on the periphery may not be peripheral to American national interests properly understood, but some conflicts will surely be more important (and some will, in any case, be more promising candidates for military intervention) than others.

The problem with departing from a strict "clear and present danger" test for intervention is, of course, that looser guidelines risk becoming formulas for overextension and exhaustion. The American people may, indeed, be appalled by evidence of "aggression, political illegitimacy, genocide, mass starvation, nuclear proliferation, [and] violations of international agreements." But this does not mean that they are willing to expend American lives to deal with these problems wherever and whenever they occur, nor should they be. The early returns on patterns of post-cold-war public support for intervention are far more mixed, and the future trends much less certain, than Mr. Kagan lets on. Hesitation regarding the use of force in Bosnia (and, for that matter, the Persian Gulf) and the strong reaction to the loss of a comparatively small number of American lives in Somalia suggest that popular enthusiasm for foreign military adventures is limited and potentially fragile.

To date we have been extraordinarily lucky. It would be doubly tragic if a future military debacle (or even a string of more costly

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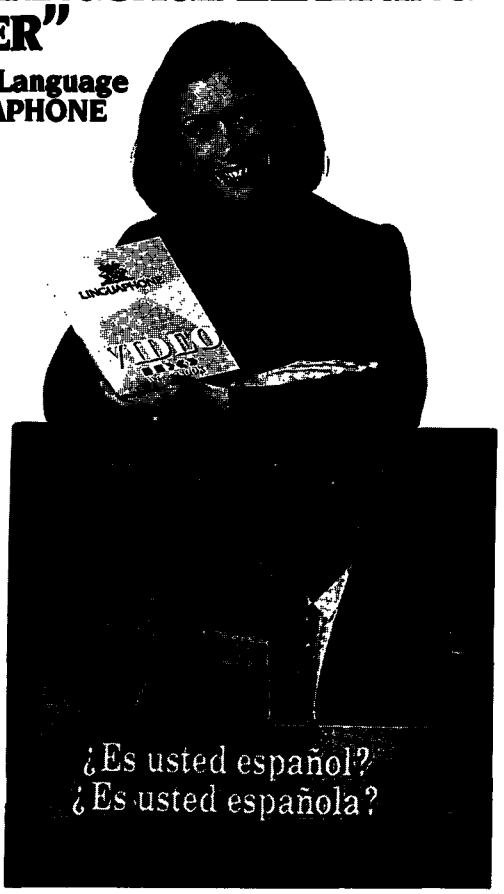

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successes) were to undermine support, not only for intervention but also for the less dramatic forms of American activism. Especially in an era when direct security threats will seem remote, public support for continued engagement is a resource to be husbanded.

Mr. Kagan's article closes with what is, in effect, a Republican call to arms. If Republicans do not advocate "global activism," he suggests, then no one else will. Whether or not this is the case, there is no question that, as the cold war fades, renewed partisan divisions could distort and eventually cripple American foreign policy. Because of the way power is divided and distributed within it, our system works best when there is debate but also, ultimately, a considerable degree of consensus. Agreement on the broad outlines of the strategy of containment did not emerge immediately in the years after World War II, but, once it had, it held for nearly a half-century. We should hope that the new debate in which we are engaged, and to which Mr. Kagan has made an important and valuable contribution, leads to a consensus as solid and a policy as successful.

AARON L. FRIEDBERG
Princeton, New Jersey

[*Mr. Friedberg is director of the research program in international security at the Center of International Studies, Princeton University.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is a great deal I find appealing about Robert Kagan's argument. I believe that the United States should be unafraid to apply its power in the world, and that there is need for a kind of world order which only a militarily dominant great power can provide. I am not a hard-core realist and do not believe that the U.S. should construe its interests narrowly: support for ideological and moral causes is also important to America's sense of itself as a democracy. Furthermore, I do not believe that we are nearly as constrained economically as many argue: the country has never been richer or more productive, and despite the budget deficit, resources remain much more a matter of will than of fiscal constraints.

Nevertheless, I find I like the "Kagan Doctrine" much more in the abstract than when I try to apply it to any present-day, real-world foreign-policy problems. Apart from purely humanitarian cases, it is hard to be enthusiastic about intervention in Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, or any of the myriad ethnic conflicts in the former Communist world. These kinds of civil wars are inherently intractable, and do not easily submit to influence by outside powers. In the absence of a larger great-power rivalry, their outcome is in virtually all cases not important to U.S. strategic or ideological interests.

As Mr. Kagan himself acknowledges, there are a number of serious foreign-policy challenges looming on the horizon, such as a revived Russia and an ambitious China. He is quite correct in asserting that the chief task of foreign policy at the present moment is to keep alive the practice of and capability for activism until such time as it becomes truly criticial to core U.S. interests. He is of the "use-it-or-lose-it" school, as are many former NATO specialists who have been searching desperately for something useful for that institution to do.

In my opinion, the much greater danger at present is "use-it-*and*-lose it," that is, intervening for secondary and poorly-thought-out objectives, and therefore wasting the political capital we have for large interventions later. For while our financial capital is enormous, the political capital available for international involvement at this point in our national history is small and relatively inelastic. The most important issue we are going to face down the road is NATO expansion to include the new democracies of Eastern Europe, though there can be tactical differences on the speed and manner with which this is to be done. NATO would be far more endangered were it to try to solve ethnic conflicts like Bosnia, which it cannot properly do, than were it simply "freeze-dried" and reconstituted later if and when a real threat from Russia emerges. Like instant coffee, a reconstituted NATO won't look or taste as good as the original, but it will be better than nothing at all.

In my view, Americans should be prepared, when the time comes, to have their young people die for Poland. I think they will be less inclined to make the proper decision then if their young people have been dying on behalf of unfamiliar causes in places like Sarajevo and Kigali along the way. If the political vision and leadership to make the right case for a big commitment later are not forthcoming, then we will have a serious problem. But we cannot sneak in this kind of decision under the guise of doing something less ambitious, nor can we work our way up to it by swatting flies in anticipation.

In a larger sense, I do not think it is inappropriate for the United States to concentrate on domestic problems right now when the foreign environment is relatively benign. There is a genuine crisis in American civil society today, from the family to public education to crime, race, and a variety of related problems which, if not thought through, will undermine our position abroad surely but steadily in the long run. Bill Clinton's election was a manifestation that many Americans feel this way as well. Though Clinton's solutions are not the right ones, there is a certain wisdom in that emphasis. In this respect, an activist foreign policy in the absence of real foreign-policy problems will only be a distraction.

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA
Washington, D.C.

[*Mr. Fukuyama, the author of* The End of History *and* The Last Man, *served as deputy director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff in 1989.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

To promote democracy, human rights, market economies, and peace throughout the world makes good sense for the United States—as it does for Germany, Canada, Sweden. Yet, for all these worthy goals, the United States will not, cannot, and should not pay any price, bear any burden. Global activism, as advocated by Robert Kagan, recalls Napoleon's grand strategy: "*on s'engage et puis on voit*"; first "one becomes engaged" (in Egypt, Spain, Russia) "and then one shall see" (at Waterloo). To be sure, American global activism has many lasting achievements to its credit. So did Napoleon Bonaparte with his enduring improvements of administration and laws, not only for France but for much of continental Europe.

Mr. Kagan criticizes those who express concern about an American "Waterloo." In a revealing aside, he writes that the American

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intervention in World War I was not due to "national interest narrowly conceived," but that the United States had an interest in intervening because it had the power to intervene.

My point is not that Mr. Kagan's interpretation here is wrong. On the contrary, he is right in a larger sense than he spells out. The United States had the power to intervene yet used its power unwisely. A credible case can be made that the United States should have used all its influence to end World War I in 1916 (as many leading Europeans advocated at that time). If successful, such a compromise peace might have led to a gradual democratization of Imperial Germany and a gradual break-up of the Hapsburg empire, a sequel that would have prevented many of the disasters that are now cited (by Mr. Kagan and others) as reasons why the United States should engage in global activism.

To intervene *just because we have the power to do so* is not a strategy that will build a world order consistent with our "economic, political, and ideological aspirations." It did not work in World War I. And recently, it did not work in Somalia. Even the 1989 intervention in Panama produced rather dubious results. The drug trafficking through Panama has not been greatly reduced and the legal implications of dragging Noriega into U.S. courts may yet come to haunt us. The U.S. Justice Department's global activism might be imitated—say, by Iran kidnapping "blasphemers" in the United States and bringing them to "justice" in Teheran.

In choosing among different foreign policies we should not mislead ourselves by using obsolete labels. Isolationism is not an option today since U.S. territory is no longer isolated by geography from devastating attacks. At the other extreme, a policy of Manifest Destiny—that is to say, establishing U.S. dominion over foreign lands—is also no longer an option; even though in some cases it might make a lot more sense than current versions of interventionism. The significant, hard choices today are between tilting in favor of intervention or tilting in favor of staying disengaged when the pros and cons are nearly balanced—as they usually are.

Contrary to the global activists, I believe a strong case can be made

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The Golan Heights

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Now that Gaza and part of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") have been turned over to the Palestinians, the clamor for peace with Syria becomes ever more strident.It is understood that in order to attain such peace, it will be necessary for Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotic-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed at Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of PanAm flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a crest. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of the 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

"With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

The current Israeli government, in its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, would seem prepared to give up the limited strategic security it now enjoys by virtue of its possession of the high ground—the ridges of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights. But Israel should not return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, all of which—except for the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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today for tilting in favor of staying disengaged in nearly all those instances where the need for intervention is not overwhelmingly compelling. My reasons are both military and political.

To clarify matters, let us first set aside interventions for charity. Charity has its own transcendental reasons and need not be justified in strategic terms. About charity it can be said: it is better to have tried and failed than not to have tried at all. About strategy, the opposite normally holds true. Sentiments of charity may even be mixed with patriotic pride. We feel good seeing our military forces, with their splendid dedication and efficiency, provide humanitarian assistance in Rwanda, Somalia, Bangladesh. Although the American people know that charity begins at home, they support charity abroad. Up to a point.

In my view, the main reason for a noninterventionist tilt today is the new asymmetry in the tools of intervention. The dreadful truth is that for many of the contingencies now mentioned by the pundits, our potential enemy could marshal more effective tools than we could. Of course, this is something every American wishes to see corrected—in theory. In practice, political disagreements at home make it wellnigh impossible to correct these asymmetries. Clearly, the problem would not be fixed by merely adding 10 or 30 percent to the U.S. defense budget (even if that were as easy as Mr. Kagan intimates).

For example, if American forces in the Caribbean were doubled, the U.S. government would not gain the tools to depose Fidel Castro or to clean up the mess in Haiti. Or, when North Korea brandishes a nuclear capability that could destroy South Korean or Japanese cities, we will not keep Seoul or Tokyo from propitiating North Korea merely by a 30-percent increase in the present types of U.S. forces in the Pacific. Or, if U.S. intelligence suspected that Iran was acquiring an enormously potent biological-warfare capability, the asymmetry in threats and counterthreats between the United States and a fanatical Iranian leadership could not be remedied without major structural changes in our intervention capabilities. In sum, for contingencies where the potential enemy is willing to run the highest risks and accept massive losses, the U.S. ability to intervene has been greatly weakened over the last few decades.

Two developments account for this deterioration, whose profound impact many American experts (including, it seems, Mr. Kagan) fail to appreciate. One is the appalling increase in the vulnerability of the United States to but a single weapon of mass destruction. Much is being written about the fact that access to such weapons is spreading. What has been less noticed is the increased vulnerability of our economy: delicate computer networks, fragile power grids, total dependence on computers and electricity for most commercial activities, and porous borders plus almost no air defenses (not to mention the absence of any missile defenses).

The second of these developments is the political hobbling of a whole range of nonmilitary (paramilitary) means that the U.S. government in the past could use to intervene against a dangerous enemy. Prior to the 1970's, U.S. national-security policy could use military-assistance programs in ways that are now precluded. It could mount covert actions far more freely than today. It could generously allocate foreign "assistance" to buy friends and weaken enemies. It could rely on a worldwide support system, now largely dismantled, that comprised hundreds of military bases, several global airlines and communications carriers totally responsive to official requests, a worldwide oil-production and -distribution system largely U.S.-controlled, and easy options to deploy America's then-dominant financial power. Last but not least, the President could count on a sense of discipline throughout the government bureaucracy that today would be regarded as authoritarian.

We may not regret the loss of these policy tools; many Americans, in fact, welcome the change as some kind of moral cleansing. But in arguing for global activism, it behooves us to keep in mind that the President today cannot use the tools—even if he wanted to—that Franklin D. Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy could so easily employ to intervene abroad.

FRED CHARLES IKLÉ
Washington, D.C.

[*Mr. Iklé was director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency from 1973 to 1977 and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from 1981 to 1988. He is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).*]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I salute Robert Kagan for the core of his argument but not its periphery. I agree that it is usually foolish to ignore small problems on the grounds of husbanding energies for larger ones. First, small problems, unattended, may feed or grow into big ones. Second, a nation's ability to respond effectively to paramount challenges may depend on habits and character developed in confronting less decisive ones. Third, a nation's pattern of behavior will shape the anticipations of others. This does not mean, however, that all small problems are equal. Some are threats to the peace, while others are tragedies confined within the borders of a single state. Bosnia and Korea are examples of the former; Haiti and Somalia, the latter. Yet Mr. Kagan lumps all four together.

I also find strained and unconvincing Mr. Kagan's claim that American policy since the cold war has been dramatically internationalist. He goes on to argue that America's behavior in the 1920's and 1930's should not properly be called "isolationalist." Well, by that standard, perhaps today's policy currents are not "isolationist," either. Whatever you want to call them, however, they smack of flight from burdens. Mr. Kagan offers U.S. efforts in Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda as evidence of "worldwide engagement and armed intervention unprecedented in scope." But if our flight from Somalia, abdication in Bosnia, and fly-by of Rwanda constitute robust internationalism, then many of our realist/isolationists will rest easy. The real point is that since America stumbled into the unprecedented status of sole superpower, it has engaged the world only in a patchwork and irresolute way, concentrating instead (to no good effect) on domestic issues.

I fear that Mr. Kagan is trying to turn back on the realists their own stratagem of conflating the "is" and the "ought." Nations necessarily behave "realistically," they say; therefore, America must do so too—ignoring the obvious point that if the first clause is true, the second is superfluous. Mr. Kagan seems to be on his way to saying

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that America should be internationalist because it is bound to be internationalist. Alas, it is not so easy.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK
Washington, D.C.

[*Mr. Muravchik, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of* Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America's Destiny.]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Kagan's case for activism is compelling in many ways, and tempting, but in the end his approach is no substitute for a more sober strategic judgment.

It is healthy that this discussion could take place at all. Two decades ago, the United States was mired in a Vietnam-era funk and was disarming unilaterally. We have recovered; the West's triumph in the cold war has vindicated American internationalism. The country's willingness to engage in a series of interventions—most particularly Desert Storm—is the mark of a body politic that is capable of sustaining a significant international role.

While Mr. Kagan thus probably exaggerates the continuity in postwar American policy, he is certainly right that the current domestic support for our international leadership is a refutation of the theories of American decline. He also makes the correct observation that, in the absence of serious rivals, the pivotal U.S. role in many international issues is more decisive than before. All this is to the good.

None of it, however, obviates the need for strategy. No country is omnipotent. Our goals may be expansive—and there are many humanitarian goals now open to us—but some principle of selectivity is unavoidable. There are, believe it or not, a few recent upheavals we have kept our forces out of (Liberia, Sudan, Algeria) and others we have been hesitant to plunge more deeply into (Bosnia). Rightly or wrongly, explicitly or implicitly, we choose where we go. But what are our criteria? What priorities are guiding us?

Mr. Kagan makes another important point: that abdication is a bad habit to get into and that credibility can be lost (or won) in the little conflicts as well as in the big ones. (Every President needs some air-traffic controllers on whom to prove his mettle early in his term.) This has been a big part of Bill Clinton's problem. The string of mishaps in 1993 in Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia undermined the U.S. position generally. No doubt the North Koreans and other big-leaguers were watching and drawing their conclusions.

Now, some of this was just a question of competence in execution. In the real world there is a premium on well-thought-out military plans that aim at a decisive result. Interventions cannot be sustained by good intentions alone, and the new era of limited interventions has revived some (I thought) discredited notions about incremental uses of force.

But beyond this question of tactics, some principle of strategic selection is also needed, for two reasons. One is that the body politic cannot be strained without limit. Whatever the fundamental health of our society, the quality of our political leadership is still a contingent variable. On the Democratic side, there is good news and bad news: the good news is the apparent end of the recent liberal taboo against any use of force; the bad news is that this liberal epiphany is still divorced from rigorous analysis of strategic and military realities. Some on the liberal side (Anthony Lewis *et al.*) will almost certainly revert to their anti-interventionism in any case where the goals are not purely humanitarian. On the Republican side, we have seen in the past year how politically tempting it has been to revive the whole war-powers case against presidential authority as botched interventions have multiplied. The congressional war-powers apparatus is by definition an anti-interventionist cause.

In the post-cold-war era, the public's judgments (as well as those of our political elite) are clearly still unformed; the President's margin for error is not all that great. As Somalia and Rwanda together demonstrate, the American people gladly support humanitarian engagements if the costs are not high; once the casualties mount, then the public's tolerance does not seem to be sustainable if no showing of a more concrete national interest can be made.

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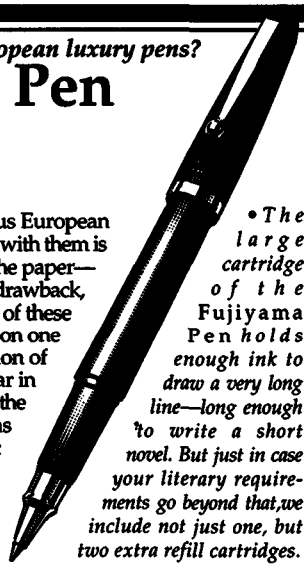

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tegy for the United States has to give priority attention—inescapably—to maintaining the basic *structure* of international order. This means maintaining the balance of power in Europe and the Far East; it means keeping the newly-powerful Germany and Japan firmly anchored to the international-security structure; it means shielding the world community against what Charles Krauthammer calls the Radical Weapons States (Iran, North Korea, Iraq). How can these not be the fundamental tasks of our national-security policy? The more exalted humanitarian goals are fine—so long as the military forces will still be available to meet the strategic tasks when a threat comes.

The gutting of our defense capabilities must, of course, be reversed. One of the extraordinary anomalies of our current national debate is, indeed, how the proliferation of missions for our troops grows while our capabilities are rapidly shrinking. The timidity so far of both Democratic and Republican leaders on the question of the necessary rearmament is not only a national disgrace; it is also an obvious weakness of any doctrine or aspiration of global activism such as the one Mr. Kagan espouses.

His enthusiasm, to repeat, is the sign of a healthy America. But someone still has to be around to ask the tough questions, case by case, about strategic necessities and military realities.

PETER W. RODMAN
Washington, D.C.

[*Mr. Rodman served as deputy assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (1987-89) and director of the Policy Planning Staff, State Department (1984-86). He is now director of Middle East Studies at CSIS.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As the single most powerful and influential power to emerge from the cold war, the United States cannot avoid involvements around the globe even if that were the preference of large portions of the American public. In that sense, Robert Kagan's plea for "global activism" is a case for the obvious.

There are, of course, voices among us that call for retrenchment. There are those who worry about overextension. There are those who would like to use—and have to some extent succeeded in using—the defense budget as a cash cow for a host of other purposes. There are efforts to establish "core" or "vital interests" as the only ones warranting the use of military force and the loss of American lives. But even among these groups there are few who would contend that the U.S. should or could now return to its continental shell.

I am in substantial sympathy with Mr. Kagan's essential argument. But as he himself notes, in a "world where opposing power is more diffuse," the choices we must confront have increased in number. Moreover, it is not only power in its various forms that is more diffuse. Without the disciplining effects of large-scale hot and cold wars, the international system as a whole is more complex and diffuse. American power to influence the shape of an eventual new world order is enormous. But it does have limits. And so does America's wisdom and skill in wielding that power. And even American power and determination cannot repeal the effects of the law of unintended consequences.

So I would hope that our debate about the American role in the post-cold-war world will not degenerate into one between minimalists and maximalists or, even worse, between those who see America tending toward either impotence or omnipotence.

We do need to come to grips with choices, especially where the use of military power is involved. (Vocabulary, incidentally, is not trivial. Activism should not be confused with interventionism. Involvement and engagement are not synonymous with commitment. Leadership does not, or at least not necessarily, mean unilateralism.)

Mr. Kagan generally tends to address the issue of choice as if it were settled. Yet he also says: "Only if [the U.S.] is ready to engage its power *when and as needed* [emphasis added] can the United States hope to shape the character and direction of the forces of change rather than be overwhelmed by them." But the "when and as needed" is precisely what serious debate turns on and what, ultimately, affects not only the amount but the content of the defense budget.

Intellectual or even political debate cannot be expected to settle this issue definitively. The Clinton administration almost certainly had no intention on January 20, 1993, of finding itself eighteen months later militarily engaged in the Caribbean, central Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, and, potentially, Korea. And it seems unlikely that the highly professional leadership of the Clinton Pentagon expected that its Bottom-Up Review, promulgating defense programs to cope with two major regional crises and providing for advanced-technology equipment for the decades ahead, would quickly become financially insupportable.

Mr. Kagan compliments Theodore Roosevelt for being the first to graft "principled ends to the exercise of power." But Roosevelt also sensed the dangers of extravagant interventionism. "We would interfere" with countries in the Caribbean, he said in his annual message to Congress in December 1904, "only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of

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The painter **Nicolas Tarkhoff** was born on 20th January 1871 in Moscow, and died in Paris on 5th June 1930 aged 59.
His studies were conducted in Moscow and made easier by the fact that his family were wealthy merchants. From the age of 24, he decided to study drawing and painting. After enrolling at the Moscow Academy of Art, he went to Paris in 1899 where he was appointed to the studios of I. P. Laurens and L. O. Merson. It must however be pointed out that before he left Russia, **Tarkhoff** exhibited paintings at the "World of Art" and "Union of Russian Painters", exhibitions where his talent was particulary noted.
Tarkhoff got married in 1905 and had three children. Highly talented, he was undoubtedly one of the greatest masters of his time with his very individual style. From 1900 he worked incessantly and painted many different subjects, such as avenues in movement, markets, "merry go round", streets scenes, people working, all giving great impression of crowds full of movement. His motherhoods are full of love. He was an inside and outside painter.
What is surprising is the "fauve" characteristics in **Tarkhoff**'s work which from 1904 onwards was brightly colored like the typical works of the fauve movement. His paintings possess exceptional vigour, his palette is widely colored and of a particular quality that one finds throughout his "oeuvre". If **Tarkhoff** was not included in the group of fauve painters at the Salon of 1905, it was probably because he had only recently arrived in Paris and not yet knowing the artistic milieux, he could not participate in the salons.
He learnt about the arrangement of mass and perspective from Cézanne. As for his streets scenes, depicted at different times of the day or night - often full of people and horse-drawn vehicles from the turn of the century, he has treated them in a very characteristic manner. His sometimes empty landscapes and streets are brought to life and highlighted in an unexpected way, through his ability to make colors vibrate, like a composer uses seven notes to create the most dazzling effects and hymns praising the beauty of the world.
His fiery temperament shows itself in use of color, in his compositions, his still-lifes, his flowers, his "suns" full of dizzy light, his still lifes in flamboyant colors.
In 1909, an important art book "Peintres de Race" was written and published by Marius Leblond, whose aim was to evaluate the best artists of the time.
Complete chapters are devoted to fourteen artists from different countries, including **Van Gogh, Gauguin,** and **Tarkhoff**. The famous art dealer, **Ambroise Vollard,** promoted him and sold his works to the greatest collectors in France and abroad, such as **Stchoukine, Morosov, the Rothschild family,** etc. But **Tarkhoff** made a big mistake by giving his works to other galleries in Paris. Vollard, who had been so successful in promoting him, did not accept this and **Tarkhoff** stopped supplying Vollard and other galleries.
In 1911, **Tarkhoff** left Paris to retreat to the countryside near Orsay, a small village where he lived apart, cutting all his contacts with his Paris galleries. After his death in 1930, his family decided not to sell his works, but to keep them for decades. This is the reason why **Tarkhoff** was forgotten until the Petit Palais learnt of the existence of the collection and started to organize exhibitions all over the world, including at the **Puchkine museum in Moscow and in Saint-Petersburg.**

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the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations."

I would guess that many internationalists who opposed invading Haiti might have supported doing so if the present administration came closer to Roosevelt in the precision of its purpose. Even then, it is worth recalling that the admonition of Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, that the U.S. should "aid the people of the [Caribbean Republics] in establishing and maintaining honest and responsible governments *to such extent as may be necessary in each particular case*" [emphasis added] did not prevent a bloody and ultimately ineffectual U.S. occupation of Haiti that lasted nineteen years.

It is not clear where Mr. Kagan would have come out on the issue of invading Haiti in order to dislodge the illegal military regime and restore and maintain the democratically-elected—but not notably democratically-inclined—Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The administration, of course, compounded the problem by its demonstrative assembly of naval and ground forces around Haiti, thereby raising serious questions about the credibility of its threats if no invasion had taken place despite the continued sway of the military regime.

Mr. Kagan is silent about the use of American ground forces to help bring order, justice, and a civilized society (to use Theodore Roosevelt's terminology) to Bosnia. Nor does he address the vexing question of how long and at what level of effort the U.S. should have continued its humanitarian operations in Rwanda since their termination without the establishment of a reasonably stable and humane government could well lead to renewed catastrophe. How many Somalias, in short, would Mr. Kagan accept? Would he extend NATO (i.e., U.S.) commitments eastward and with what kind of force?

This is not meant to criticize Mr. Kagan for lack of specifics in his relatively brief article. It is, rather, to point out that his "when and as needed" criterion for the use of U.S. power is the beginning of the debate, not its end.

Mr. Kagan's point that American defense spending has become "too low to allow the United States to carry out the many new tasks it will face in the post-cold-war era" is incontestable. So is the proposition that "the increases that will be necessary will hardly bankrupt the country." But where does this leave us?

If the numbers and types of military operations already undertaken by an administration whose officials "find it hard to overcome the instinctive aversion to the use of power" are anywhere near the norm for the years ahead, would he make any trade-offs with the other capabilities needed to "move America through this next, dangerous phase of history"?

In sum, Mr. Kagan's next article should start where his last one left off.

HELMUT SONNENFELDT
Washington, D.C.

[*Mr. Sonnenfeldt, now at the Brookings Institution, served in the State Department from 1952 to 1977 in a variety of positions, including director of the Office of Research and Analysis for the USSR and Eastern Europe, and counselor.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Kagan correctly emphasizes the difficulty of making any simple distinctions between core interests and peripheral ones. The Sudetenland (or, more precisely, stopping Hitler from dismembering Czechoslovakia) turned out to be a core interest of the Western powers in 1938, although it was peripheral geographically and its importance was not seen clearly at the time.

To be fair, the so-called realists do not deny that small threats can eventually become large ones. That consummate realist, Henry Kissinger, has often commented on the dilemma that frequently confronts statesmen–when problems are easiest to handle, the need to act is usually less obvious; by the time the urgency is clear, the range of options available is much narrower. Serious realists thus acknowledge the difficulty of distinguishing core interests from peripheral ones.

However, true realism also must come to terms with another point that Mr. Kagan emphasizes: the distinction between core interests and peripheral ones must ultimately be the result of a political process, rather than the conclusion of some splendid Metternichian calculation. For the United States that political process will necessarily reflect the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of American democracy, so that the determination of our core interests cannot realistically be based solely on hard-headed calculation, divorced from the characteristic American insistence on an idealistic basis for international action. Paradoxically, hard-headed realism is finally unrealistic.

Mr. Kagan is also right in saying that the real limitations on America's role in this historical moment are limitations of will rather than of power. The collapse of the Soviet Union has left us with no powerful enemies, with the world's strongest economic powers as our allies. The problem is not that the relative power of the United States has declined but more nearly the opposite: there appears to be so little power opposing us that there are possibilities of getting involved almost everywhere.

Mr. Kagan seems to feel that this is not a problem. The best way to counter threats to our national existence, he asserts, is not by keeping our "powder dry for the really serious threats," but instead by resisting "all those who oppose America's view of world order." Mr. Kagan argues that the way we handle small threats will determine the way we handle the larger ones, because "once appeasing adversaries and wishing away problems becomes a habit, it will be a hard habit to break." While acknowledging that "we cannot plug every breach in the world order," he seems to propose doing almost exactly that: even Haiti and Somalia appear as tests of American will that we cannot afford to fail.

But the choice is not so starkly between either responding to all threats to "world order" or responding only to threats to our national existence. There really is no way to escape the need for some degree of selectivity about where we intervene, particularly if it is a question of intervening with American force.

The need for selectivity arises less from the limitations on American power—although that power is *not* unlimited—than from the same concern about America's long-term will power that Mr. Kagan proposes to deal with by making intervention a habit. While it is true, as he says, that the use of force need not be tied to "unmistakable and narrowly defined security interests" in order

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to gain public support, support for the use of force is not likely to last long—particularly not in the face of American casualties—if it is based solely on an appeal to American idealism, and all the less if such an appeal is itself based on the abstraction of a commitment to "world order."

During my visits with troops preceding the Persian Gulf war, what impressed me about the young men and women who were prepared to face death for their country was that they seemed to be moved by the thought that "if we don't do it now, some other Americans will have to do it later, at much higher cost." Is this an appeal to American self-interest or to our idealism—or both?

If Americans need both a sense of interest and a sense of duty to sustain the use of force, they also need two other things which Mr. Kagan's argument tends to neglect. They need to believe that others are doing their share; and they don't like failure (the damage to American will, as well as credibility, from Vietnam and Lebanon are reminders of the price that failure can extract). All of this argues for much greater caution than Mr. Kagan advocates when it comes to putting American servicemen and women in harm's way in a place, such as Haiti, that is peripheral to American interests and where the chances of success are problematic.

PAUL WOLFOWITZ
Washington, D.C.

[*Mr. Wolfowitz, dean of Johns Hopkins's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, was Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 1989-93, and United States Ambassador to Indonesia, 1986-89.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Kagan and I agree that America should exercise its power "in pursuit of a broad definition of interests—in pursuit, that is, of a more decent world order." We disagree on two counts: first, whether my agenda for the United States—securing its core interests—is skimpy; and second, whether instability in peripheral areas of the world matters much.

In my article, "The Core vs. the Periphery" (COMMENTARY, December 1993), I argued that American foreign policy during the cold war helped create peace and prosperity among most of the major powers of the world. American leadership, I wrote, "created an open world economy that, more than any other single factor, explains the extraordinary progress toward peace, democracy, and civilized conduct in the industrial nations over the last half-century."

This represents a massive accomplishment for America's interests and ideals. It is also a fragile one. If strains in the central balances of power in Europe and East Asia were to deepen, if mercantilist pressures among the great industrial states were to increase, the consequences could be catastrophic.

Power imbalances and economic crises were important ingredients in the collapse of the international system during the 1930's. Hence I proposed a foreign policy that is highly internationalist and expansive; one that commits the United States to secure its achievements during the cold war and to consolidate the benefits gained by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Such a policy requires the Unites States aggressively to consolidate free trade, capitalism, and constitutional government abroad, providing political and economic assistance to friendly governments and groups. It commits America to be actively engaged in—in many cases formally committed to defend—several major countries in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Central and Latin America. It requires a formidable military capability, some of which will need to be permanently stationed in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. This is an agenda worthy of the Roman empire at its peak. It is not enough for Robert Kagan.

He wishes that the United States involve itself in peripheral areas of the world, taking up the old imperial quest for order. He points out that during the cold war the United States intervened in the periphery many times, even fought a war in Vietnam, where American interests were "debatable." Precisely. What did the United States gain from that noble but unwise course? Nothing: the loss of Vietnam was supposed to make all the dominoes of Southeast Asia fall; instead, those countries allied ever more closely with the United States. What did Britain gain from acquiring millions of square miles in the hinterlands of Africa and Asia? What did France gain from its ruinous defense of Algeria? What did the Soviet Union gain

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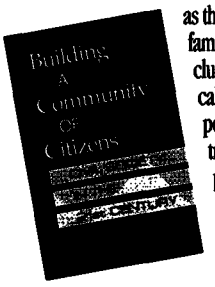

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David R. Boldt,
Columnist, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

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from its bloody efforts in Afghanistan?

Mr. Kagan does not seem to deny that crises on the periphery are "low-stakes issues." His rationale for universal activism is different: since we really cannot distinguish between important and peripheral interests, we should intervene everywhere. This startling assertion would seem to preclude the need for any strategic analysis whatsoever. It is true that international relations is not an exact science and serious people can, have, and will disagree over what constitutes an important American interest—Bosnia is an example of a country that is "on the cusp" in such debates—but surely the answer is not to throw up one's hands and intervene everywhere just to be safe.

In fact, Mr. Kagan himself seems quite able to distinguish between "high-stakes" and "small-stakes" issues; almost all the potential problems he lists as worrisome—which would, I agreee, require an American response—involve a resurgent threat from a great power: Russia, China, Japan, and Germany. On the other hand, almost all the current crises he lists—Somalia Haiti, Serbia—involve small, dysfunctional countries that can cause trouble, even bloodshed, in their neighborhoods, but do not pose a serious threat to the broader region. There will always be points of instability in the world; to see all of them, indiscriminately, as "tests of American strength, character, and endurance essential to the preservation of a more stable world order" is to invite the United States to engage in the limitless and futile business of ordering the world. This is a task for world federalism, not American foreign policy.

Finally, Mr. Kagan asserts that his vision of the world should find a natural home in the Republican party. History suggests otherwise. From Versailles to Haiti, the Republican party has always been the party of prudence in foreign policy. Theodore Roosevelt, whom Mr. Kagan cites approvingly, was once asked what he thought of Woodrow Wilson's belief that America should be willing to intervene in Europe if rules of "world order" were violated. He scornfully inquired whether this meant that the United States should go to war "every time a Jugoslav wishes to slap a Czechoslav in the face." TR believed in, and spoke the language of, spheres of influence and national interests, rather than world order and global activism. With the end of the cold war—in which ideological and strategic lines crisscrossed—the Republican party will return to its internationalist, but realist, roots.

William F. Buckley, Jr. once said that the defining element of conservatism is realism: realism about the limits of state power, the malleability of human beings and societies, the intractable nature of a world of nation-states. Mr. Kagan has a Wilsonian vision that sees governmental power as omnipotent, rejects the need to set priorities, advocates the social engineering of complex and ancient societies, and expects that these good intentions coupled with state power can transform the world. Sounds like a job for the Democrats.

FAREED ZAKARIA

New York City

[*Mr. Zakaria is managing editor of* Foreign Affairs.]

ROBERT KAGAN writes:

My goal in making a case for global activism was, as Elliott Abrams notes, to push against what seemed to me an increasing drift, especially among conservatives and Republicans, away from what over the last twenty years had been an expansive view of America's role in the world. My main point was that the end of the cold war, and the collapse of our long-time foe, had neither ended the requirement for an active, vigilant foreign and defense policy nor deprived the American people of an important goal in foreign affairs: the maintenance of a decent world order conducive to American material and philosophical interests. I thus argued against the idea that only vital, core interests were worth engaging our attention and our power, and I questioned whether the divide between core and periphery was as clear and determinative as some have claimed.

Helmut Sonnenfeldt says I have made a case for the obvious. I agree. Most of those who have been kind enough to respond to my article share the conviction, as Francis Fukuyama eloquently puts it, "that the United States should be unafraid to apply its power in the world, and that there is need for a kind of world order which only a militarily dominant great power can provide." But I am less sure than Mr. Sonnenfeldt that such an expansive view of America's role dominates the current discussion.

The case for a more limited set of goals—tied to the defense of identifiable vital interests—has been powerfully made by leading conservative foreign-policy theorists from Owen Harries to Henry Kissinger to Jeane Kirkpatrick. Neither isolationists nor neo-isolationists, they have simply opposed shouldering the burden of promoting an American-style world order except against those threats which rather directly imperil American security. The very idea of the United States as "the sole remaining superpower," Harries has recently written, is an anachronism in the post-cold-war era. The United States has ceased to be such a power "because its circumstances and its interests no longer require or permit it to be one." Kissinger advises us, as he did in the 1970's, to "learn the limits of our capacities." Jeane Kirkpatrick has suggested that "with 'normal' times, we can again become a normal nation."

Such arguments have force and appeal. The difference between their view and mine is not the difference between isolationism and crusading idealism, but, as Aaron L. Friedberg points out, between two different perspectives on what it means to be a world power. I think most of my respondents agree with Mr. Friedberg and Peter W. Rodman that this is a debate worth having, even if they do not fully share my perspective.

Some of my respondents have criticized me for apparently advocating constant intervention everywhere and at all times. I did not intend to suggest any such thing, but I obviously erred in not making it clear that a policy of global activism can and should be conducted with as much prudence as any other kind of policy. Let me now say what I had thought it unnecessary to have to say in my article. I, too, believe the United States cannot intervene any time and any place a problem arises. I, too, believe judgment must be exercised, prudence must be shown, resources must be matched to commitments, priorities must be balanced, and recklessness, carelessness, insobriety, foolishness, and irrationality must be avoided. Such requirements exist whether

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one advocates greater or lesser activism in international affairs.

Let me also acknowledge that I did not set forth what Mr. Rodman calls a "principle of selectivity" for judging where to intervene and where to stand aloof. But this was not an oversight. I doubt that such *a priori* principles can be set forth, unless one is willing to restrict American policy to the defense of strategic chokepoints, sea lines of communication, commercial markets, and other of the more measurable interests. Henry Kissinger, on the antepenultimate page of his most recent book, *Diplomacy*, writes that "not every evil can be combated by America . . . [b]ut some monsters need to be, if not slain, at least resisted. What is most needed are criteria for selectivity." But in the remaining two pages of his book, he does not even suggest what those criteria might be. I do not blame him.

Those who find my argument lacking in this way have a hard time explaining precisely what should and should not prompt an American response. They certainly do not agree among themselves. Elliott Abrams correctly writes that intervention in the Caribbean, "where American interests have been clear since this country was founded," is easier to defend than intervention elsewhere. But Mr. Abrams has also taken the perfectly defensible position that the United States has no interest in intervening in Haiti. Fareed Zakaria lists "Central and Latin America" as part of America's "core" interests, but by omission consigns the Caribbean, where Haitians live, to the "periphery." Europe is also part of Mr. Zakaria's "core," but the part of Europe where war currently rages is on the "periphery." (As Paul Wolfowitz rightly notes, there was a time when the Sudetenland also looked to many like the "periphery.") Most of my respondents would omit Somalia from any list of areas where America should intervene, but Mr. Wolfowitz has elsewhere ably defended at least the Bush administration's version of the humanitarian mission in Somalia (see *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1994).

This is not to find fault with any of these judgments. It is only to say that the demand for a doctrine which spells out precisely where and under what circumstances the United States should intervene is impossible. Unless one is prepared to oppose all the actual and potential interventions of the post-cold-war era—in Panama, in Iraq, in Somalia, in Haiti, in Bosnia—then one will be hard-pressed, I believe, to set forth "criteria of selectivity" that would explain why we should, for instance, intervene in Panama to depose a military dictator, but not in Haiti.*

Perhaps those who believe it was a mistake to use U.S. military power to restore President Aristide are right, although so far it would not appear so. But would they construct an entire doctrine around

* It will not do to argue that the United States moved against Manuel Noriega because he sold drugs, or threatened the Canal, or harmed Americans in Panama. Efforts to oust Noriega began when he refused to turn over power to elected democratic presidents in the early and mid-1980's. The indictment against Noriega for narcotics trafficking actually worked against efforts to remove him in 1988—as Elliott Abrams knows better than anyone. As for the Canal, Noriega consistently went out of his way to declare that he would not threaten it, which was one reason the American military, especially in Panama, opposed any efforts to remove him. The harming of Americans in Panama came only after the United States had launched a campaign to force Noriega from power.

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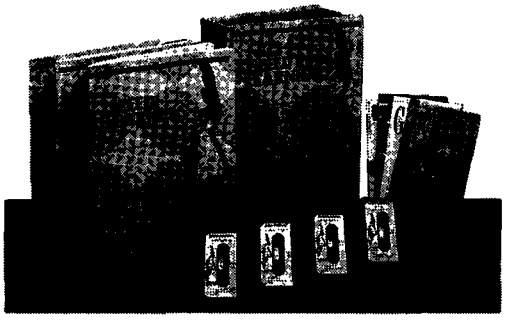

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that judgment? As for Somalia, those who argue that the original mission of the Bush administration was correct, but that the Clinton administration's expansion of that mission was a mistake, may also be right. But is there a doctrine that will unerringly guide us through situations like the one in Somalia? Would we want to promise, for instance, to abide by a "Somalia Doctrine," i.e., that the United States should *never* get involved in the internal politics of a nation where we have intervened for humanitarian purposes? Or will there not be some occasions when such involvement might be proper and necessary? The "no-nation-building" doctrine heavily influenced American policy at the end of the Gulf war. But some might reasonably ask, in retrospect, whether we would have been wiser to remove Saddam Hussein when we had the power to do so directly, even if that meant shouldering the burden of "nation-building" in Iraq.

No general approach to foreign policy can provide the kinds of answers some of my critics are seeking. Whether we tilt toward or away from engagement and intervention, choices will have to be made on the basis of the unique circumstances of each situation. The most successful doctrine of our time, the doctrine of containment, could not have satisfied the requirement for "criteria of selectivity." And indeed, as the events in Vietnam attest, it was a doctrine capable of leading the United States into misjudgment and failure. But neither the errors nor the failures discredited the overall approach.

Today, a policy of global activism in pursuit of a more decent world order must also suffer its share of misjudgments and failures. In my opinion, however, a policy of retrenchment, a policy of defending only "core" and "vital" interests, a policy of behaving not like the global superpower we are, but like the "normal" power we are not, is fraught with many, greater dangers.

Some of my respondents, while generally supporting a more activist approach to world affairs, still worry that the demanding course I advocate will overtax American capabilities, depleting both our material and spiritual reserves. The popular mood may, as Messrs. Friedberg, Abrams, Fukuyama, and Wolfowitz suggest, be unwilling to expend lives for the defense of "world order" in Kigali, Sarajevo, or Port-au-Prince. I tend to believe public attitudes have been influenced by the rather lackluster debate between a Republican party warning against "quagmires" and a Democratic President unable to articulate, much less consistently carry out, a strong and active foreign policy.

But public hostility to overseas involvement is hardly a new phenomenon. In the 1930's a much better case could have been made that the public was unwilling to intervene in Europe and that American resources, in the short term, were lacking. In the 1970's, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger founded the policy of détente, in part, on their assumption that the United States lacked the will and the capacity to engage in an all-out competition with the Soviet Union. Kissinger argued then, as he does now, that a "new era" had arrived which required scaling back American ambitions and accepting the limits of a "new equilibrium." Then, too, the United States was to have difficulty "bringing [its] great power to bear on the issues most likely to arise." Then, too, there had been a "global diffusion of political power" in a world of "turbulence and complexity." And Kissinger had recommended then as he does now that Americans had to "learn the limits of our capacities."

It is worth considering the likely state of the world today had America heeded Kissinger's advice to accommodate itself to Soviet power in the 1970's. Today, if there is a need for the United States to engage itself actively in international affairs—and most of my critics agree that there is—then the responsibility lies upon us to make the issues plain to our fellow Americans. Political leadership was essential to overcome material and spiritual weaknesses in the 1930's and 1970's; it is no less essential in the 1990's.

Overextension and overconfidence are errors to be avoided. I believe the problems confronting the United States today, however, have more to do with lack of confidence and underachievement. The pendulum, to borrow Mr. Abrams's metaphor, has not swung too far in the direction of engagement in world affairs.

A reluctance to act is often praised as prudence, while a willingness to act can be labeled rashness. The history of the 20th century ought to have upset these misguided assumptions. Even today, however, an intelligent student of American foreign policy like Mr. Zakaria can praise the "prudence" of the Republican party in the years after Versailles. Mr. Wolfowitz, by contrast, writing in *Foreign Affairs* earlier this year, described those Republican policies as "based on illusions—illusions that helped to produce the debacle of the 1930's." I am hopeful that we will not succumb to some of the reigning illusions of our own time.

The Nature of Art

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Roger Kimball's "Clement Greenberg: An Appreciation" [September] came as a disappointment. Greenberg's vaunted high seriousness and admirable powers of analysis notwithstanding, his work merits a greater disavowal than Mr. Kimball seemed able or willing to offer.

Identifying the fundamental cause of the disintegration that permeates and threatens to undermine our culture may be difficult, . . . but the idea that art need not contain recognizable subject matter is one sensible place from which to begin a diagnosis. Greenberg did not invent that notion, but his acceptance of it appears to have been unequivocal, and he is probably more closely identified with it than any other recent figure of such intellectual authority and acclaim.

The idea itself is corrupt and destructive, implying either that pure form is as significant as human experience or that art need not signify. Both implications are false. Form exists as a critical component of art, but form alone does not constitute art. The representation of human experience does, and the assertion of that simple and basic truth might be the single strongest point from which to undertake the reintegration and revitalization of our enervated culture. . . .

HARVEY GORDON
Kalamazoo, Michigan

ROGER KIMBALL writes:

Harvey Gordon is hardly the first person to object that abstract art is an engine of social and moral disintegration. Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin thought so; as in fact did Adolf Hitler, who delivered an impassioned speech linking "so-

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called modern art" and "Germany's collapse and general decline" when he opened the Great Exhibition of German Art in 1937. Today, a fashionable school of Marxist criticism in the academy blames the New York School of abstract painters for helping the United States government prosecute the cold war. I mention this by way of background.

The real issue—and it is a deep issue—concerns the place of form in aesthetic experience. Mr. Gordon's fundamental error, I believe, is in thinking that the experience of form and "human experience" are necessarily at odds. He prefers his paintings to display naturalistic illusion, which is certainly his prerogative. But if painting is to be more than an exercise in nostalgia, reminding us of objects that happen to be absent, then questions of form immediately begin to intrude. When we ask about the *quality* of a specific work of art, and begin to compare it with other works, then questions of form become paramount.

I suspect that Mr. Gordon's association of social disintegration and abstract art is based partly on the notion that an interest in "pure form" is a recent development. He may, therefore, find some solace in contemplating the following passage from Plato's *Philebus*:

> When I say "beauty of form," I am trying to express, not what most people would understand by the words, such as beauty of animals or of painting, but I mean . . . the straight line and the circle and the plane and the solid figures formed from these. . . . For I assert that the beauty of these is not relative, like that of other things, but they are always absolutely beautiful by nature and afford peculiar pleasures in no way comparable with the pleasures of scratching. . . .

Leni Riefenstahl

To the Editor of Commentary:

Richard Grenier's article on Leni Riefenstahl ["The Fuehrer's Filmmaker," Movies, August] surprised me. I recall an incident that occurred in 1937-38 when the Nazis had not yet denied Jews the privilege of visiting Berlin's zoo. The zoo had a section with restaurants and a musical stage. During that year, Leni Riefenstahl was a featured entertainer. As part of her act, she told tall tales about the "wonderful" new rule of Hitler's Germany. Her mother introduced her with the words "my Leni loves the Fuehrer." Although I had enjoyed Riefenstahl's movie *S.O.S. Iceberg*, her tales and her mother's introduction shocked me. At that time Jews were already victims of the Nazis, and the scramble to find a haven outside Germany was an emotional drain on the Jewish community.

Forty-three years later, one of my former assistants who had become a professor at the Technical University of Berlin sent me a postcard with a picture credited to Leni Riefenstahl. . . . Seeing the card revived anxieties I had long thought dead. When I met my former assistant several months later, he asked me how I had enjoyed his card. Before I had a chance to explain, he praised the "real art" on the postcard. When I told him of Riefenstahl's background, he replied, "It is still art." My response was that if murderers' accomplices were singing a song that was considered art, I would still not wish to listen to them.

Leni Riefenstahl may not have compromised her artistic integrity, but she more than compromised her moral integrity. She remains a symbol of the perpetrators of the tragedy that resulted in the taking of six million Jewish lives. . . .

Gerald M. Friedman
City University of New York
New York City

Prejudice

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mary Ann Glendon, in her otherwise excellent article ["Partial Justice," August], states flatly that racial prejudice has "no respectability at all in contemporary American society." That flattering opinion is odd, considering academic complaisance toward racist attitudes in a professor like Leonard Jeffries—to name only one example. Anti-white racism is not only tolerated but actively encouraged in the cozier PC sections of the academic community. . . .

It is, of course, quite true that an overt tribal prejudice against "nonwhites" is now formally stigmatized—provided, of course, that it occurs in the "white" community. But the sweeping statement that racial prejudice is now universally disreputable has, alas, more to do with wishful thinking than with real life. Tribal attitudes have certainly become less open among some sections of the community (though not, as noted above, among the PC and ethnic activists); but . . . I would suggest that these distempers have neither vanished nor lost their rather awful capacity to provide, especially under pressure, a sort of ghastly comfort and sense of community in any part of American society—and if it comes to that, in Europe, too.

Herb Greer
Manchester, England

"One Down"

To the Editor of Commentary:

For the past several years Commentary has been publishing stories by Allegra Goodman, thereby allowing its readers to observe the development of a young writer. Miss Goodman's first stories were competent, though not, I thought, remarkable. But her latest ["One Down," September] compresses in a few pages the evocation of several personalities and, indeed, entire lives. Miss Goodman's eye for the significant detail and her ability to suggest depth and complexity in her characters are the talents of a first-rate writer of fiction.

John H.R. Polt
Oakland, California

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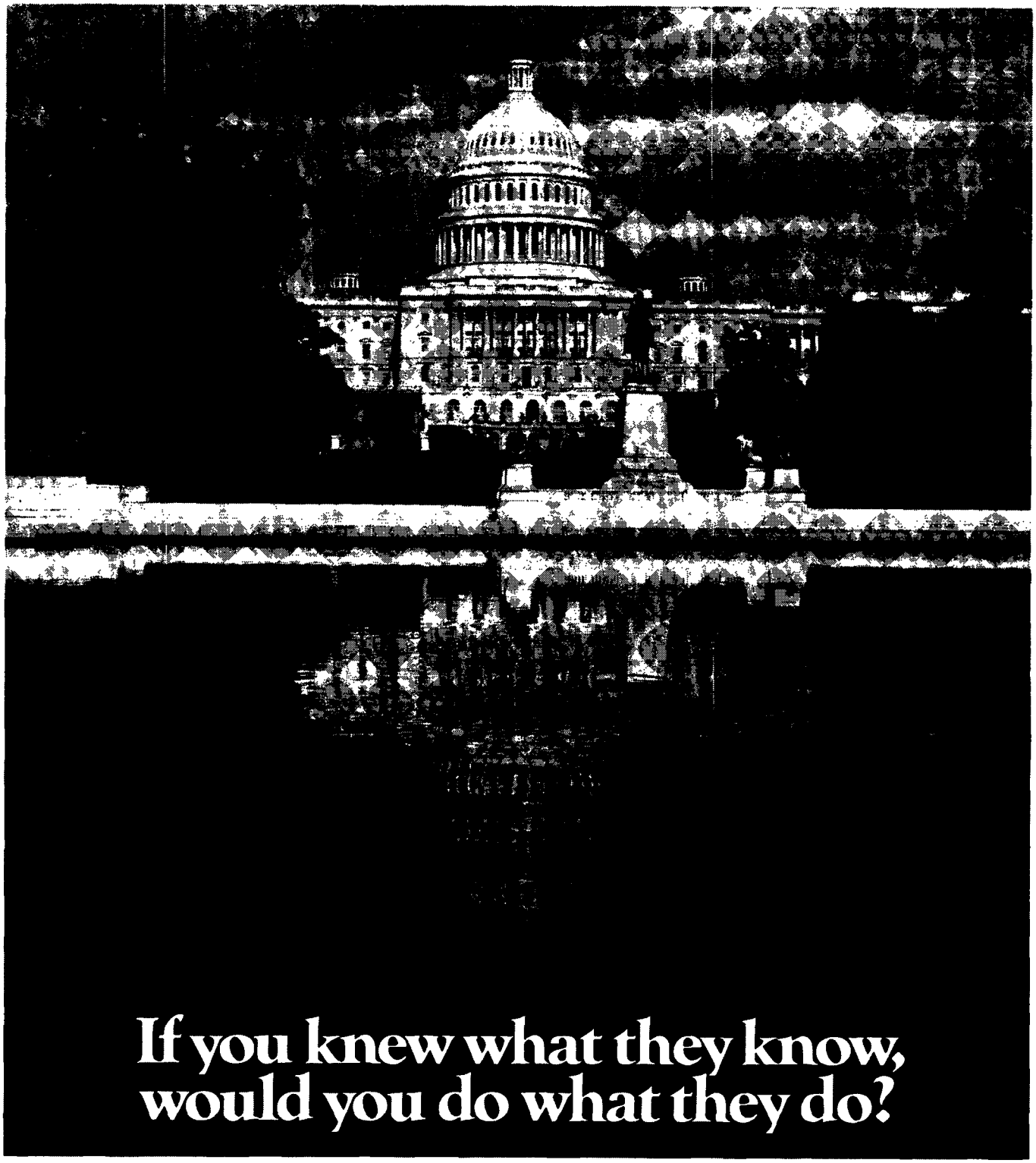

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The Peace Process So Far

PEOPLE keep asking me if I have changed my mind about the peace process. Do I, they want to know, still hold to the gloomy view I first expressed even before the Rabin-Arafat handshake on the White House lawn—the view that the process subsequently ratified and accelerated by that handshake would lead not to peace but to another major war?*

After all, these people tell me, look how much has already been achieved in little more than a year. Jordan has now finally made peace with Israel, and other Arab states like Morocco and Tunisia are preparing to follow suit. The Gulf states are taking steps to end the Arab boycott. And even President Hafez al-Assad of Syria—the most intransigently anti-Israel of the front-line Arab states—has begun moving, albeit grudgingly, toward what he himself calls "full peace with Israel."

In addition to all this, Israel, formerly isolated and the target of incessant criticism and even vilification, is now becoming a respected member of the international community. The Vatican at long last has established full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state, and Israel's leaders, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, are not only applauded wherever they go but have now even been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Altogether, Peres's vision of a new Middle East in which the lion lies down with the lamb, and everyone settles in to make money not war, no longer seems naively utopian. Considering all this, am I ready to admit that I was wrong?

The answer, alas, is no. But before I explain why, I want to say a word about that "alas." It is not merely rhetorical and it is not hypocritical. I have stressed from the beginning that I take no pleasure in criticizing the policies of the Israeli government, and it is still true that I would like nothing better than to be proved wrong (if for no other reason—though there are of course many others—that I am the grandfather of four Israeli children living in Jerusalem). But—and again I say alas—events so far have given me no solid ground on which to change my mind.

CONTRARY to what some have alleged, my anxieties over the peace process did not stem from a preference for Likud over Labor and were not originally set off by the accession to power of Yitzhak Rabin in 1992. Indeed, they were triggered a year earlier by the international conference in Madrid which the Likud government under Rabin's predecessor, Yitzhak Shamir, agreed to attend (largely under pressure from the Bush administration).†

Shamir probably had no choice but to yield to these pressures, and in his stolid and stubborn way he managed to wangle a number of conditions that he hoped would lessen the danger of a gang-up on Israel. Nevertheless, it seemed obvious to me that Israel was being forced onto a track that, conditions or no conditions, would drive it inexorably toward a destination that in those days the vast majority of Israelis were strongly opposed to reaching: a withdrawal by Israel to the 1967 borders and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. What was much less obvious then, but already conceivable, was that the same train would also roar on toward an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

No doubt the reelection of Shamir in 1992 would have acted as a brake on

* See "A Statement on the Peace Process" (April 1993) and "Another Statement on the Peace Process" (June 1993).

† I discussed all this at length in "America and Israel: An Ominous Change" (January 1992).

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this train—though having (however unwillingly) given it a head of steam, even he might have been unable to bring it to a halt, let alone to derail it. Be that as it may, Shamir was not reelected. Labor won and Rabin became Prime Minister. And while it may be hard to remember after all that has transpired since then, Labor won only because Rabin, a former general with a well-deserved reputation as a hawk, had promised to control the doves in his own party—beginning with his great rival, that born-again dove Shimon Peres—who were correctly suspected by the electorate of wishing to negotiate openly with the PLO and of favoring the establishment of a Palestinian state.

It was different with the Golan Heights. No one, least of all the people who lived there and who had done wonders in developing the place, dreamed that Rabin would so much as consider turning it back to Syria. Unlike Judea and Samaria, where the Jewish settlers were overwhelmingly Likud supporters, the Israelis living on the Golan were almost all Labor-party people. Hence when Rabin assured them during the campaign that he would "never go down from the Golan," they trusted him, they cheered him, and they gave him their votes.

Yet from the moment Rabin took office, he began moving in an unexpectedly dovish direction. He made Peres his Foreign Minister (and Peres in turn appointed as his deputy the even more dovish Yossi Beilin, whom Rabin had once derided as "Peres's poodle"). Then, in forming his government coalition, he passed over the small hard-line Tsomet party in favor of the leftist Meretz faction, thereby ensuring that the doves, uncontrolled, would fly freely through the air. (In an American context, it would be as though Scoop Jackson had been elected President of the United States in 1976 and had then proceeded to appoint Teddy Kennedy as his Secretary of State while filling the rest of his cabinet with McGovernites.)

Whatever the reasons may have been—and they remain mysterious—for Rabin's violation of this fundamental commitment to tame the doves, the result was that he wound up being tamed by them. Thus, having insisted that he would never accept Arafat as a negotiating partner, he acquiesced in the negotiations Peres had set up in Oslo with the PLO. He then crossed another of his old "red lines" when he joined with Arafat in signing the deal that emerged from those negotiations. To this day he still maintains that the Oslo agreement will not lead to a Palestinian state, but no one, at least not in Israel, any longer believes it. He also continues to maintain—angrily—that he will never allow Jerusalem to be divided again, but more and more Israelis are ceasing to believe that, either. Israelis are learning that where the Palestinians are concerned, the voice may be the voice of Rabin, but the hands on the throttle are the hands of Peres.

So, too, on the Golan Heights, where Rabin's own former supporters feel so betrayed that almost every rock and tree carries ugly graffiti against him. The old red line here has by now faded to the point of invisibility, and only two questions remain. One is how short a period Rabin will accept for Israeli withdrawal. The other is whether he will keep his latest promise to hold a referendum before actually acknowledging Syrian sovereignty over the Heights and beginning the complete withdrawal that is Assad's price for signing a piece of paper with him.

THE train, then, is roaring down the track, and Rabin and Peres are by now determined to ensure that nothing will get in its way before it reaches the end of the line.

Nothing:

Not the fact that the PLO has yet to deliver on its commitment under the Oslo agreement to abrogate the clauses in its charter calling for the destruction of Israel;

Not the fact that Palestinian terrorism, far from being brought to a halt as also stipulated by the Oslo agreement, has intensified, claiming nearly 100 Israeli lives since the handshake on the White House lawn—more than in any year

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during the *intifada*, and indeed more than in any year since the establishment of the state, although less than there would have been had not several terrorist attempts failed (no thanks to Arafat's "police," who were put in Gaza to keep the terrorists in check);

Not the fact that both the PLO and the Syrians have denounced the peace treaty with Jordan;

And not the fact that Syria, while announcing its willingness to make peace, continues arming itself to the teeth, and in particular enhancing its ability to launch missile attacks aginst Israel. (Evidently, however, the Syrians do not agree with those Israelis who pooh-pooh the need for territorial buffers in an age of missiles.* Assad's own missiles have not lessened by one whit his determination to recover the Golan Heights.)

All this is pretty much what I, for one, expected. So too, conversely, is the progress that has been made—with Jordan, with the Gulf states, with the international community, and even with Syria. For it seemed clear to me that once Israel set out to do what everyone had been demanding of it—namely, withdraw from the territories it captured in the Six-Day War in favor of a Palestinian state—no one who did not openly espouse its destruction would have any justification to refrain from entering into better relations with it.

As for those Arabs (and some others) who still secretly or not so secretly hoped to wipe the Jewish state off the map, they could bide their time while the first stage of the "phased plan" for its destruction—consisting of the recapture by the Palestinians of a part of the territory now occupied by Israel—was being implemented. Conquest of the rest could be deferred to further stages down the road.

Still, if all these developments have struck me as predictable, I must confess that I have been surprised by the *amount* of terrorism the Palestinians have perpetrated since Oslo. Not that I anticipated a complete end to terrorism; but I did think there would be much less of it than there has actually turned out to be.

This expectation was based on a grisly maxim that has been attributed to a British Foreign Secretary (Ernest Bevin?) who is said to have remarked that "a reasonable amount of blood" would have to be shed before a certain agreement could be broken. How much Jewish blood would be considered reasonable in this case—in other words, how many Israelis would have to be murdered before the public rose up and demanded that the deal be called off—no one could tell. My mistaken guess was that 100 would be more than enough. The Palestinians knew better.

HERE it may be that Arafat was influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by the agreement on Vietnam negotiated in Paris in 1972 by Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho (for which, like Rabin, Peres, and Arafat after them, they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize). Under that agreement, the United States began a gradual withdrawal of its troops from Vietnam, during which certain conditions to ensure the peace and the continued independence of South Vietnam were supposed to be met by Hanoi. The North Vietnamese repeatedly violated those conditions, but never to the point of provoking the United States to reverse course. On the contrary, the violations served to increase pressure on the Americans to get out. Once they did, Hanoi mounted a full-scale invasion that did indeed bring peace to South Vietnam—the peace of the grave.

The analogy is by no means perfect: the Palestinians are not as powerful as the North Vietnamese were (though in combination with other Arab states they might well be) and the Israelis are not as weak and demoralized as the South Vietnamese were (though by the time the peace process is completed by their

* The authors of "U.S. Forces on the Golan Heights?" set forth in rich detail the arguments for the continuing importance of territory in an age of missiles. See below pp. 76-77.

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withdrawal to their pre-'67 borders they will certainly be more vulnerable to attack and possibly more demoralized than they are today). Even so, the tactics of the Palestinians are strikingly similar to those that were used by the North Vietnamese after the Paris peace accords.

For that matter, Palestinian negotiating tactics in general bear a remarkable resemblance to those of the North Vietnamese: fight and talk. Which brings us to the relation between the PLO and Hamas.

There is no doubt that a serious political rivalry exists between the mainly secular radicals of the PLO and the Muslim fundamentalists of Hamas. Nor is there any doubt that they will become embroiled in a bloody struggle for control of the new Palestinian state once it comes into being. But for now, the two groups are in a strategic alliance to get the Israelis out as quickly as possible by means of a fight-and-talk campaign, with Hamas doing the fighting and the PLO doing the talking. A recent editorial in the *Jerusalem Post* puts the case well:

> There is no real conflict between the PLO and Hamas. The PLO may go through the motions of arresting Hamas functionaries. . . . But if there is one thing about which there is no disagreement among Palestinians it is that only the "armed struggle" has forced Israel to recognize the PLO and agree to a withdrawal from the territories and the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state. They believe that more "armed struggle" will spur Israel to make more concessions and faster.

After the horrible bombing of the bus in Tel Aviv this past October, Arafat (probably for fear that 22 dead and twice as many injured might add up to a reasonable amount of blood) finally expressed his regret at a terrorist act. But Farouk Kaddoumi, his "Foreign Minister," had only weeks earlier declared: "No one can complain about what Hamas and Jihad are doing. I say that it is the right of every Palestinian to struggle so long as there is a single Israeli soldier on the land of Palestine." As the *Jerusalem Post* commented: "It is these words, rather than Arafat's 'regrets,' which reflect the PLO's true sentiments."

WHERE are we then? As I see it, we are sitting through a three-act drama. The first act, begun in Madrid in 1991, ended on the White House lawn nearly two years later with the world-famous handshake. In the second act, on which the curtain has not yet fallen, the processes set in motion by the first have been working themselves out. There has been a glitch here and a small surprise there, but on the whole the plot has unfolded as it was designed to do. Barring some utterly unforeseeable twist, this act will end with the Israelis retreating to the borders of 1967 (perhaps with some minor modifications), the establishment of a Palestinian state (very likely with East Jerusalem as its capital), and the signing of a treaty between Israel and Syria.

Act Two may well also include scenes of conflict between the Israeli government and the Jews living in Judea, Samaria, and the Golan Heights, who will resist being expelled from their homes. If so, the conflict will be resolved through a combination of bribery and coercion in favor of the government, and these territories will become *Judenrein* under Arab rule.

It is only in Act Three that we will discover whether Shimon Peres is right in prophesying that a new Middle East will emerge out of this series of events. Peres envisages a Middle East in which peace will serve as the foundation of a regional prosperity rivaling that of East Asia. To the less lyrical Rabin, the new Middle East will be a place where Israel—separated from a restive Palestinian population it is neither willing nor able to control, and at peace with all the surrounding Arab states—will for the first time enjoy real security.

If Peres and Rabin are right, then their names will go down as a blessing in the annals of Jewish history. But if, as I believe, they are blinding themselves to the true radicalism of their enemies (who are not "enemies of peace," as Israeli doves like to say, but enemies of Israel) and deluding themselves about

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the historical forces involved, then all hell will break loose in Act Three, and woe to their Jewish contemporaries and descendants alike.

I have described the scenario I envisage more than once in these pages: a Lebanon-like civil war for control of the new Palestinian state between the PLO and Hamas (with other factions loyal respectively to Jordan, Syria, and Iran complicating the picture); intervention (as before in Lebanon) by Syria, which still regards the whole area as its territory; Israel being drawn in to hold Syria back; Iraq and Iran then setting aside their own internecine disputes and joining with the Syrians and the Palestinians (and even, in the worst case, with a post-Mubarak Egypt and a post-Hussein Jordan) in a *jihad* against a shrunken Jewish state.

If this *jihad* were to succeed, the Arab world would at last have realized its dream of eliminating that abomination, a sovereign Jewish state, from the realm of Islam. If it were to fail, Israel would find itself reoccupying all the territories it had relinquished for the sake of peace, but at the cost of God knows how many lives.

To be sure, this is not the only scenario leading to such an outcome. There is also the possibility that the new Palestinian state will become (as has already been happening in Gaza since Arafat took over there) a launching pad for more and bigger terrorist raids against Israel. Retaliation by Israel could then draw the other Arab states into the same temporary alliance in the hope of accomplishing the same objective.

Adding to the persuasiveness of this apocalyptic scenario is the chance of a fundamentalist takeover in Egypt and Jordan when their present rulers die or are assassinated. One of the arguments advanced by Israeli supporters of the peace process is that it will lessen the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. Yet by dealing with Israel and seeming (or, worse yet, actually meaning) to accept it as legitimate, these governments only inflame the fundamentalists, who make no bones about their determination to destroy the Jewish state, and who would far rather do so by the sword than by cunning.

Let me say it one last time: I pray that Rabin and Peres are right—and all the more so because (always barring unforeseeable surprises leading to a convulsive political upheaval within Israel) it is almost certainly too late for them to turn back. But more than a year after Oslo, I still find their glowing vision of the future their policies will create less plausible than the nightmare that I fear those policies are really bringing to pass.

—NORMAN PODHORETZ

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What To Do About Welfare

Charles Murray

IN THE 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton's television ad promising to "end welfare as we know it" was one of his best vote-getters, so effective that it was the first choice for a heavy media buy in closely contested states at the end of the campaign. This should come as no surprise. No American social program has been so unpopular, so consistently, so long, as welfare. But why? What is wrong with welfare that evokes such a widespread urge to "do something about it"?

One obvious candidate is size and cost. Bill Clinton campaigned during a surging increase in the welfare rolls. By the end of his first year in office, more than fourteen million people would be enrolled in Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), representing more than 7 percent of American families and two million more recipients than had been on the rolls in 1989.

With so many working-aged people being supported by government, the amounts of money involved have mounted accordingly. But, as with so many other questions involving welfare, there is no uncontroversial answer as to exactly how much, because few can agree about where the definition of "welfare" begins and ends.

In 1990, before the most recent increase in the rolls had gotten well under way, figures cited by various parties in the welfare debate ranged from $21 billion to $210 billion. The lower figure, used by those who claim that welfare is really a piddling part of the budget, represents just AFDC. But no serious student of the issue denies that Medicaid, food stamps, and public housing are also part of welfare. That brings the total to $129 billion. But this number covers only part of the array of programs for low-income families. The upper-end figure of $210 billion is the bottom line for the Congressional Research Service's report of state and federal expenditures on "cash and noncash benefits for persons with limited income" in 1990. Of that, $152 billion came from the federal government.

Two hundred and ten billion dollars works out to $6,270 for every man, woman, and child under the poverty line in 1990, only a few hundred dollars less than the official poverty threshold ($6,652 for a single unrelated individual in 1990). Statements such as "We could eliminate poverty tomorrow if we just gave the money we're already spending directly to poor people" may be oversimplified, but they are not so far off the mark either.

One approach to the topic of "what to do about welfare" could thus reasonably involve ways to reduce expenditures. Yet, though complaints about wasting money on welfare loafers are commonly heard, and though the country truly does spend a lot of money on welfare, it is not obvious that money is really the problem. Suppose that for $210 billion we were buying peaceful neighborhoods and happy, healthy children in our low-income neighborhoods. Who would say that the nation could not afford it? Money may well become a decisive issue as the dependent population continues to grow, but it has not yet.

Instead, I will proceed from the assumption that the main source of the nationwide desire to do something about welfare is grounded in concerns about what welfare is doing to the health of the society. Judging from all that can be found in the press, on talk shows, and in the technical literature, an unusually broad consensus embracing just about everyone except the hard-core Left now accepts that something has gone drastically wrong with the family, that the breakdown is disproportionately found in poor neighborhoods, and that the welfare system is deeply implicated.

Different people put different emphases on just what has gone wrong. There are so many choices. In many welfare families, no one has ever held a regular job. This is bad for the taxpayer who supports such families, bad for the women who are trapped into poverty, and, most portentously in the long run, bad for children who need to be socialized to the world of work. In many

CHARLES MURRAY is Bradley Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. In addition to *The Bell Curve*, which has just been published by the Free Press, he is the author of *Losing Ground* and *In Pursuit*.

Mr. Murray writes: "This article was to have been done jointly with the late Richard J. Herrnstein, but his illness prevented him from working on it. Parts of the discussion are drawn from the book we wrote together, *The Bell Curve*, and all of it is suffused with Richard Herrnstein's influence on my thinking."

The present article is the fifth in a series that began with James Q. Wilson on crime (September), followed by Gertrude Himmelfarb on the universities and Chester E. Finn, Jr. on the schools (October), and Eliot A. Cohen on national defense (November).

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welfare families, the mother works, but only sporadically and surreptitiously in the illegal economy. The welfare system becomes an instrument for teaching her children all the wrong lessons about how to get along in life.

In the vast majority of welfare homes, there is no biological father in the house. In many, there has never been a father. The male figure in the home is instead likely to consist of a series of boyfriends who do not act as fathers but as abusive interlopers.

THESE circumstances are damaging to children in so many ways that to list them individually would be to trivialize them. On this issue, the intellectual conventional wisdom has changed remarkably in just the last few years. The visible turning point was Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's 1993 *Atlantic* article, "Dan Quayle Was Right," but the groundwork had been laid in the technical journals in preceding years, as more and more scholars concluded that single parenthood was bad for children independently of poverty and other markers of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Statistically, measures of child well-being tend to order families by their structure: conditions are best for children in intact families, next best for children of divorce (it does not seem to help if the custodial parent remarries), and worst for children born out of wedlock (even if the woman later marries another man). This ordering applies to a wide variety of outcomes, from emotional development to school performance to delinquency to family formation in the next generation.

But the evidence accumulated so far tells only part of the story. Families that have been on welfare for long periods of time are overwhelmingly concentrated in communities where many other welfare families live. While it is unfortunate when a child must grow up in a family without a father, it is a disaster when a generation of children—especially male children—grows up in a neighborhood without fathers. The proof of this is before our eyes in the black inner city, where the young men reaching twenty in 1994 came of age in neighborhoods in which about half the children were born out of wedlock. Social science is only beginning to calibrate the extent and nature of the "neighborhood effects" that compound the problems associated with illegitimacy.

If these results were confined to the inner cities of our major cities, the effects on American society would still be grim enough. A look at the national mood about crime shows how a problem that is still localized (as the most severe crime rates still are, impressions notwithstanding) can nonetheless impinge on American life as a whole. But there is no reason to think that the effects will remain within the black inner city. The white illegitimacy ratio, which stood at 22 percent for all whites in 1991, is approaching the 50-percent mark in a number of working-class American cities. There is no good reason to assume that white communities with extremely high illegitimacy ratios will escape the effects of an unsocialized new generation.

These observations have led me to conclude that illegitimacy is the central social problem of our time, and that its spread threatens the underpinning of a free society. We cannot have a free society, by this reasoning, unless the great majority of young people come of age having internalized norms of self-restraint, self-reliance, and commitment to a civic order, and receive an upbringing that prepares them to transmit these same values to their children. We cannot achieve that kind of socialization without fathers playing a father's role in the great majority of homes where children grow up.

For those who accept this pessimistic reasoning, extreme measures to change the welfare system are justified; for those who still consider illegitimacy to be one problem among many, more incremental reforms seem called for. Put broadly, four types of welfare reform are being considered in various combinations: workfare; the substitution of work for welfare; penalties for fathers; and the complete abolition of welfare.

WORKFARE refers to a variety of reforms that would make welfare beneficiaries show up at some sort of job, usually a public-service one, or lose their benefits. Softer versions of workfare call upon welfare recipients to attend job-training programs or risk losing their benefits. Offshoots include such things as "learnfare," in which mothers lose part or all of their benefits if their children drop out of school.

The rationale for workfare that resonates with the voters is, roughly, "make them do something for the money we're giving them." Many also hope that the prospect of having to work for benefits will either deter young women from having babies in the first place or induce them to find real jobs on their own and leave welfare.

An additional intellectual rationale has been advanced by Lawrence Mead, a political scientist at New York University, who argues that what welfare recipients really lack is the ability to cope with the routines of ordinary life. Surveys show that they share the same aspirations as people in mainstream society, Mead says, but their lives are so chaotic and their discipline so ill-formed that the government must provide the framework that has been missing in their own lives.

Workfare is not an untried idea. Local attempts to force women to work for welfare have been made off and on in scattered jurisdictions for decades. The 1988 welfare-reform bill put the federal government's imprimatur on such programs. The evaluation reports now add up to a

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fair-sized library, and they tell a consistent story. Participants in training and work programs usually have higher mean earnings than persons in the control groups. But these mean differences amount to hundreds of dollars per year, not thousands. The effects on long-term employment are small. The most successful programs tend to be located in small cities and rural areas rather than large cities.

A few exceptions to these generalizations are noteworthy. A program in Riverside, California, showed dramatic early results, apparently because of an energetic, decisive administrator who was given extraordinary freedom to define work rules, replace staff who did not perform, and enforce sanctions against welfare recipients who did not cooperate. If anyone can figure out how to duplicate these conditions nationwide, workfare might be able to produce much larger effects than shown in the typical evaluation.

As far as I know, no one has ever documented a deterrent effect for workfare. But evidence indicates that many welfare recipients, sometimes a significant portion of the total caseload, will drop out of a welfare program if a strictly enforced work requirement is installed.

IN 1986, the social critic Mickey Kaus proposed an alternative to workfare that would scrap the existing welfare system and replace it with public-service jobs at the minimum wage. The government would provide medical care and child care for preschool children, but otherwise the woman would be on her own. If she showed up at one of the local job sites and worked, she would get a paycheck at the end of the week. If she chose not to work, that would be her business.

Kaus's proposal, which he subsequently elaborated in his book, *The End of Equality*,* has much to recommend it. Workfare programs break down because of built-in contradictions. Welfare bureaucracies do not function well as employers. They have no incentives to reduce their caseloads and no incentives to make welfare recipients behave as real employees. Trying to enforce sanctions against uncooperative cases tends to become a long and tedious process. The Kaus system asks only that the government recreate a WPA-style agency for administering public-service jobs—something that the government did successfully in the 1930's.

Whether the government could do as much again is open to question. The typical WPA male worker in the 1930's came to the program with a set of motivations much different from those of the typical AFDC mother in the 1990's. Yet it seems plausible to me that the Kaus system would not only achieve substantial effects on work behavior among AFDC mothers but also have a substantial deterrent effect.

The program's cost, which Kaus himself set at $43 billion to $59 billion for national implementation, might not be as large as expected. Since we know that large proportions of the caseload have taken themselves off the rolls when a strict work requirement was imposed, we could expect a similarly large drop if the Kaus plan were implemented. And while it is difficult to imagine the federal government adopting a scrap-welfare-for-work proposal with the pristine purity necessary to make it succeed, it is possible to imagine a state doing so, if states were given the option of folding all the money currently spent on AFDC, food stamps, and public housing into a public-service jobs program.

ENFORCEMENT of child support among unmarried fathers is one of the most popular reforms under consideration, not least because it gives people a chance to say the right things about the responsibilities of the male. Like workfare, enforcement of child support is an old idea. Toughly worded laws are already on the books requiring child support, and the federal government is spending about $2 billion a year on the Child Support Enforcement program originated in 1975.

Despite these efforts, paternity is not established for about two-thirds of illegitimate births. The failure rate is so high partly because of poor enforcement, but mainly because the law asks so little of the unwed mother. The government has leverage only when she wants to qualify for AFDC benefits. For this, she is required merely to cooperate in identifying the father, a condition that can be satisfied by giving the name of a man whose whereabouts are unknown or even by her earnest statement that she does not know who the father is.

The proposed reform with the most teeth is to withhold all AFDC benefits unless the father is actually identified and located. Would such a threat help control the behavior of males? Perhaps—if the father had a job in the aboveground economy, if the state had in place methods of garnisheeing his wages, and if the state were able summarily to jail fathers who failed to meet their obligations.

Yet to list these conditions is to expose the reasons not to expect much from reforms of child support. Many unwed fathers have no visible means of support, and an even higher proportion will flee into that category, or disappear entirely, if child-support enforcement is tightened.

Would such measures nonetheless "send the right signals" about the responsibilities of men for their children? Many think so; I am a holdout. The alternative "right signal" is to tell young women from the outset—from childhood—that

* See the review by Michael Horowitz in the December 1992 COMMENTARY.—ED.

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they had better choose the father of their babies very carefully, because it is next to impossible for anyone, including the state, to force a man to take on the responsibilities of fatherhood.

THIS brings us to the fourth option, scrapping welfare altogether, a proposal with which I have been associated for some years. I am under no illusions that Congress is about to pass such a plan nationally. But, as with the Kaus plan, a state can do what the federal government cannot. And it is conceivable that Congress will pass reforms permitting the states wide discretion in restructuring the way they spend their welfare budgets.

The main reason for scrapping welfare is to reduce the number of babies born to single women. The secondary reason is to maximize the chance that children born to single women are raised by mature adults who are able and willing to provide a loving, stable, nurturing environment—a result that will ensue because more children will be given up for adoption at birth, and because single mothers who choose to keep their babies in a no-welfare society will be self-selected and thus their number will be limited to those who have the most resources for caring for children.

These goals presume that ending welfare will have a drastic effect on behavior. One must ask whether there is good reason to believe that it will.

One way of approaching the question is to ask whether welfare causes illegitimacy in the first place. I have written two reviews of this debate in the past two years—one long and technical, the other shorter and nontechnical*—and will not try to cover all of the ground here. These are the highlights plus a few new points:

Academics have focused almost exclusively on comparisons of illegitimacy based on the differences in welfare payments across states. It is now generally if reluctantly acknowledged by these scholars that the generosity of welfare benefits has a relationship to extramarital fertility among whites. More recent work is showing that a relationship exists among blacks as well. The size of the effect for whites seems to be in the region of a 5-percent change in extramarital fertility for a 10-percent change in benefits, with some of the estimates substantially larger than that.

This effect is called small by those unhappy to admit that welfare has any relationship at all to extramarital fertility. I treat the fact that *any* effect has been found as I would treat favorable testimony from a hostile witness—the analyses have generally consisted of regression equations with a multitude of independent variables, making it as hard as possible to show an independent effect for AFDC.

A broader observation about these studies is that trying to analyze the relationship of welfare to illegitimacy by examining cross-state variation in AFDC benefits has a number of serious methodological problems that are bound to limit the magnitude of the effect that AFDC is permitted to show. I have been pointing to such problems in print for many years. So far as I know, none of the analyses using cross-state benefits has even acknowledged the existence of these technical problems, much less tried to deal with them.

Last summer, 76 social scientists signed a statement saying that the relationship of welfare to illegitimacy was small. When I replied that the very studies they had in mind were consistent with something in the neighborhood of a 50-percent drop in white illegitimacy if welfare were eliminated, there were cries of outrage—but not because my statement was technically inaccurate. It was a straightforward extrapolation of the 5-percent (or more) change in white fertility per 10-percent change in welfare benefits that has been found in recent research.

I should add that I do not place much faith in such linear extrapolations in this case. Indeed, I argue from other evidence that the effects would most likely steepen as the reductions in welfare approached 100 percent. But this is speculative—no one has any empirical way to estimate how the curve might be shaped.

MEANWHILE, two characteristics of illegitimate births imply a stronger relationship to welfare than that indicated by the cross-state analyses.

The first of these characteristics is that the illegitimate birth rate has been increasing while the legitimate birth rate has been decreasing. The *rate* in this case refers to the production of babies per unit of population, in contrast to the more commonly used statistic, the illegitimacy *ratio*, representing the proportion of live births that are extramarital.

The logic goes like this: birth rates are driven by broad historic forces that are so powerful and so consistent that they have applied everywhere in the West. Put simply, birth rates fall wherever women have an option to do something besides have babies. The options are brought about by better medical care (so more babies survive to adulthood), increased wealth and educational opportunities, and the opening of careers to women. Improved technology for birth control and access to abortion facilitate the effects of these forces.

Thanks to all this, among both blacks and whites in America, the number of legitimate babies per unit of population has been falling steeply. But during this same period, concen-

* "Welfare and the Family: The American Experience," *Journal of Labor Economics* (January 1993), and "Does Welfare Bring More Babies?," *Public Interest* (Spring 1994).

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trated in the post-1960's, the number of illegitimate babies per unit of population has been rising. In other words, something is increasing the production of one kind of baby (that born to single women) at the same time that the production of the other kind of baby (that born to married women) is dropping.

The scholars who say that welfare cannot be an important cause of the breakdown of marriage and the encouragement of illegitimacy have yet to offer an explanation of what this mysterious something might be. The existence of a welfare system that pays single women to have babies meets the test of parsimony.

Perhaps, however, the "mysterious something" is the lack of these new options for disadvantaged women. But why specify *single* disadvantaged women? That brings us to one of the most provocative features of illegitimacy, its relationship to poverty—not poverty after the baby is born, but before. It is one of the stronger reasons for believing that the welfare system is implicated in the production of illegitimate babies.

Begin with young single women from affluent families or women in high-paying jobs. For them, the welfare system is obviously irrelevant. They are restrained from having babies out of wedlock by moral considerations, by fear of the social penalties (both of which still exist, though weakened, in middle-class circles), by a concern that the child have a father around the house, and because having a baby would interfere with their plans for the future.

In most of the poorest communities, having a baby out of wedlock is no longer subject to social stigma, nor do moral considerations still appear to carry much weight. But the welfare system is very much part of the picture. For a poor young woman, the welfare system is highly relevant to her future if she has a child, easing the short-term economic penalties that might ordinarily restrain her childbearing. The poorer she is, the more attractive the welfare package, and the more likely that she will think herself enabled by it to have a baby.

The implication of this logic is that illegitimate births will be concentrated among poor young women—and they are. This may be inferred from the information about family income from the Bureau of the Census data, showing that in 1992, women with incomes of less than $20,000 contributed 73 percent of all illegitimate babies, while women with incomes above $75,000 contributed just 2 percent.

But these data are imprecise, because income may have fallen after the baby was born (and the woman had to quit work, for example). The logic linking welfare to illegitimacy specifically refers to women who are poor before the baby is born. For data on this point, I turn to one of the best available bases, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY),* and ask: of women of all races who were below the poverty line in the year prior to giving birth, how many of their children were born out of wedlock? The answer is 56 percent. Among women who were anywhere above the poverty line, only 11 percent of babies were born out of wedlock.

WHY should illegitimate births be so much more likely to occur among women who are already poor? The common argument that young women with few prospects "want something to love" may be true, but it has no answer to the obvious rejoinder, that single poor young women in the years before the welfare system began probably wanted something to love as well, and yet the vast majority of them nonetheless made sure they were married before bearing a child. Other things being equal, poor single young women face the most daunting prospects if they have a baby without a man to help take care of it, and that reality used to govern the behavior of such young women. Of course the sexual revolution has changed the behavior of young women at all levels of society, but why has it produced babies predominantly in just one economic class?

Once again, an answer based on a welfare system that offers incentives only to poor women meets the test of parsimony. Once again, the scholarly literature has yet to offer an alternative explanation, or even to acknowledge that an alternative explanation is called for.

There is one additional characteristic of women who are at most risk of giving birth to children out of wedlock: they generally have low intelligence. This point is new to the welfare debate. Richard Herrnstein and I discuss it at length in *The Bell Curve*, again using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, which administered a high-quality cognitive test to its subjects when the study began. The chances that a poor young woman's baby would be born out of wedlock were 68 percent if she had an IQ of 85, but only 26 percent if she had an IQ of 115.

Lest it be thought that this result is conflated with racial complications, it should be noted that the relationship held among whites as powerfully as among the population as a whole. Lest it be thought that the result is conflated with the opportunity that smart women have to go to college, it should also be noted that the relationship holds as powerfully among women who never got beyond high school as it does for the population as a whole. Lest it be thought that this is a reflection of socioeconomic background, the independent importance of IQ is still great after holding

* The NLSY is a very large (originally 12,686 persons), nationally representative sample of American youths who were aged 14 to 22 in 1979, when the study began, and have been followed ever since.

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socioeconomic status constant. Conversely, the independent importance of socioeconomic background after holding the effects of IQ constant is severely attenuated.

Summarizing the overall picture: women in the NLSY (in their mid-twenties to early thirties when this observation applies) who remained childless or had babies within marriage had a mean IQ of 102. Those who had an illegitimate baby but never went on welfare had a mean IQ of 93. Those who went on welfare but did not become chronically dependent on welfare had a mean IQ of 89. Those who became chronic welfare recipients had a mean IQ of 85.

Now back to the first and most crucial goal of welfare reform, that it drastically reduce the number of children conceived by unmarried women. In trying to develop methods for accomplishing this goal, we know from the outset that both sex and the cuddliness of babies are going to continue to exert their powerful attractions. We know that decisions about whether to have sex and whether to use birth control are not usually made in moments of calm reflection.

Therefore, any reform must somehow generate a situation in which a young woman, despite not being calm and reflective, and often despite not being very bright, is so scared at the prospect of getting pregnant that she will not have intercourse, or will take care not to get pregnant if she does.

This means that the welfare reform will have accomplished one of two things. Either the change has been so big, so immediate, and so punishing that even a young, poor, and not very smart girl has been affected by it; or else the change has directly motivated people around that young woman to take an active role in urging her not to have the baby.

Bill Clinton's program, based on the threat of "two years and out, if you've had a reasonable chance at job training and a reasonable chance to find a job," is not calculated to meet this criterion. Two years is an eternity to a young girl. The neighborhood is filled with single women who have been on welfare for ages and have not gotten thrown off. Is a sixteen-year-old going to believe that she will really be cut off welfare two years down the road, or will she believe the daily evidence around her?

Other commonly urged recommendations—sex education, counseling, and the like—are going to be just as futile. A major change in the behavior of young women and the adults in their lives will occur only when the prospect of having a child out of wedlock is once again so immediately, tangibly punishing that it overrides everything else—the importuning of the male, the desire for sex, the thoughtlessness of the moment, the anticipated cuddliness of the baby. Such a change will take place only when young people have had it drummed into their heads from their earliest memories that having a baby without a husband entails awful consequences. Subtle moral reasoning is not the response that works. "My father would kill me" is the kind of response that works.

From time immemorial, fathers and mothers raised the vast majority of their daughters, bright ones and dull ones, to understand these lessons. Somehow, in the last half-century, they began to lose their capacity to do so—curiously, just as social-welfare benefits for single women expanded. I want to press the argument that the overriding threat, short-term and tangible, which once sustained low illegitimacy ratios was the economic burden that the single woman presented to her parents and to the community. I do not mean to deny the many ways in which noneconomic social stigma played a role or to minimize the importance of religious belief, but I would argue that much of their force was underwritten by economics.

At this point, we reach a question that cannot be answered by more social-science research but only by experience: if welfare were to be abolished in the late 20th century, would a revival of the economic threat be enough to drive down illegitimacy? Or do we need a contemporaneous revival of the moral sanctions against illegitimacy to make the economic penalties work? The good news is that the two forces can be counted on to work together, because of a built-in safety mechanism of American democracy. Welfare will not be abolished until the moral sanctions against illegitimacy have also gained great strength. There will not be enough votes until that mood is broad and deep.

It is only because of the sea change in the conventional wisdom about the deficiencies of single-parent families that proposals to end welfare are now being taken seriously. So far, that change has been couched in utilitarian terms. The next step, already well under way, is for language to change. Now, the elites are willing to say, "Having a baby if you are young and single is ill-advised." It seems to me that the truer way to put the issue is this: bringing a new life into the world is one of the most profoundly important moral acts of a person's life. To bring a child into the world knowing that you are not intellectually, emotionally, or materially ready to care for that child is *wrong*.

When the elites are broadly willing to accept that formulation, and not before, welfare will be ended. And at that stage, we can also be confident that the financial penalties of single parenthood that ending welfare would reimpose are going to be reinforced by moral suasion.

Different parts of the country will reach this state of affairs sooner than others. In Utah, for

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example, with its low illegitimacy ratio plus the moral force of the Church of Latter Day Saints and that church's elaborate system of social welfare, one may be confident that if the entire federal welfare system disappeared tomorrow, the result would be overwhelmingly positive, with only the most minor new problems. But if the same legislation were to apply to Harlem, where more than 80 percent of children have been born out of wedlock for a decade and nongovernmental social-welfare institutions are scattered and in disarray, one may be equally confident that the short-term result would be chaos on a massive scale.

DRAWING these strands together, here are the characteristics of legislation that might have a chance of passing in the next several years:

• *The centerpiece of the legislation should be freedom for the states to experiment.* Congress knows beyond doubt that the welfare system it currently mandates for the entire country is a failure. The next thing for Congress to learn is that it does not have a one-size-fits-all answer to amend that failure. The solution is to permit the states to adopt a wide variety of plans.

Thus, Congress should develop a simple formula whereby states can take the money that would otherwise flow into them in the form of AFDC payments, food stamps, and housing benefits (and as many other means-tested programs as possible) and use it for other ways of dealing with the needs of children currently supported by the welfare system.

One example of a simple formula is to base the amount of the allocation on the budgets for those programs in the last year before the federal legislation is passed. States should also be permitted to end those programs altogether and forgo federal funds completely, though it is doubtful whether any state would choose to go that route.

Initially, most states would probably opt for modest reforms along the lines Congress is contemplating—more workfare, more job training, perhaps soft time limits. But a few brave states are likely to try something more ambitious. Probably one or two will adopt much more aggressive workfare or time limits than the ones in the Clinton plan. Perhaps a state somewhere will choose to adopt a version of the Kaus plan, funding public-service jobs in lieu of welfare benefits. My hope is that some state will also end welfare. If a state should consider doing so, here are some guidelines that I would recommend:

• *Grandfather everyone now on the system, letting them retain their existing package of benefits under the existing rules.* The reasons for grandfathering are both ethical and pragmatic. For many women, welfare has turned out to be a Faustian bargain in which the government plays the role of the devil. Having made this bargain, many of the women on welfare are so mired in the habits of dependency and so bereft of job skills that it is unethical for the government now to demand that they pull themselves together. Pragmatically, grandfathering is probably a prerequisite for getting any such plan through a state legislature.

I should add that some grace period is also necessary between the passage of the legislation and the time it takes effect. Nine months and one day is the symbolically correct period. Practically, a year seems about right: long enough to allow the word to spread, abrupt enough to preserve the shock value that is an essential part of changing behavior.

• *Limit the reform to unmarried women.* This step is primarily to facilitate building a political coalition that can get the legislation passed, but it also can be taken without jeopardizing the desired result. Divorced and abandoned women are not at the heart of the welfare problem. On the contrary, most of them treat welfare as it was originally intended: as a temporary bridge. When you read statistics such as "half of all women get off welfare within two years," it is divorced women who have brought down the average.

It may be objected that to limit the reform to unmarried women provides an incentive for pregnant girls to enter into a marriage of convenience. This may well be true, but it is a good result, not a bad one. Men who sign a marriage certificate are much more easily held to account for support of the child than men who do not.

Is not limiting the reform to unmarried women discriminatory? Yes, that is one of the main points of doing anything about welfare. I am not enthusiastic about using government policy positively to reward marriage, but it is another thing to end government policy that undermines marriage—as welfare for single women undeniably does.

• *"Ending welfare" should mean at a minimum cutting off all payments which are contingent on or augmented by having a baby.* The core benefit to be ended altogether is AFDC. Medicaid benefits for the child should be left in place, because the existence of Medicaid has gutted the alternative ways in which medical care could be made reliably available to poor children (whereas there remain many alternative ways of providing children with food, shelter, and nurturing).

What about housing and food stamps? I doubt if it is possible to end them altogether. If a woman is poor enough to qualify for housing benefits and food stamps without a child, it seems unlikely that the courts would allow those benefits to be cut off because a child has been born.

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Instead, a state that adopts the "end-welfare" option should simply become neutral with regard to births out of wedlock. In principle, the best way for the state to become neutral is the approach advocated by Milton Friedman: dismantle the entire social-welfare structure with its multiplicity of benefits and bureaucracies, replace it with a cash floor using the mechanism of the negative-income tax, and make that cash floor invariant regardless of the number of children. But I cannot imagine Congress giving states the option of converting all federal-subsidy programs into a negative-income tax (though it is certainly an intriguing idea). Some steps short of that need to be worked out.

One attractive possibility is to return to the original intention of the 1935 act that created welfare. AFDC would continue to be available for widows with young children and for divorced or abandoned women with young children, with a higher cash payment to compensate for the cuts in housing and food benefits. Unemployment benefits would also remain available for men and women alike, with or without children. I favor broadening and strengthening the unemployment-insurance system as part of this approach.

• *Limit the initial legislation to teenagers.* It is widely assumed that if welfare is ended, some other mechanisms will be required to replace it. Most of these options (I will describe some presently) involve extensive interventions *in loco parentis.* Limiting the initial legislation to teenagers has two merits. First, it is much better to let the government act *in loco parentis* for minors than for adults. Second, a political consensus already exists about single teenage girls having babies that has not yet consolidated about single adult women having babies.

IF A state ends welfare in the ways I have just described, a large behavioral impact may be expected—somewhere in the region of a 50-percent reduction in illegitimate births among whites (and probably among blacks as well) if the cross-state analyses are taken seriously.

Other effects are hard to predict. Some people assume that large numbers of pregnant women will move across the border to the next state, others predict a surge in abortions. The type and size of the effects will also depend on the nature of a state's caseload. The effects in a mostly rural plains or mountain state are likely to play out much differently than the effects in states with large cities. In any case, a substantial number of single women will continue to get pregnant. What happens to them and their children? These measures should be considered:

• *Actively support adoption at birth.* Today, the welfare system and its satellite social-work agencies typically discourage adoption. The pregnant single woman who wants to give up her child for adoption is more likely to be encouraged to keep the baby than to be praised. This is perverse. In America, the pool of mature, caring adoptive parents is deep, not just for perfect white babies but for children of all races and for children with physical and mental handicaps, *if*—the proviso is crucial—the child can be adopted at birth. Any comparison of what is known about child abuse and neglect, emotional development, or educational success suggests that the child of a never-married teenager has a better chance in an adoptive home.

If welfare has been ended, many more pregnant women will be looking at adoption, and the state can do much to help. Changes in laws can encourage a larger pool of adoptive parents by reinforcing the rights of the adoptive parents and by strictly limiting the rights of the biological parents. Adoption agencies can facilitate the adoption of black children by ending restrictions on transracial adoption.

• *Offer group living for pregnant women.* For a pregnant young woman from a functioning family and a functioning community, the best support network consists of friends and relatives. One of the chief reasons for ending welfare is to revitalize those networks. But one of the saddest aspects of today's burgeoning illegitimacy is that many pregnant young women have no friends and relatives who are competent to provide advice and nurturing during the pregnancy, let alone to help think through what will happen after the baby is born. This will continue to be true when welfare is ended.

States that end welfare should therefore look carefully at the experience of the homes for pregnant single women that dotted the country earlier in the century, most notably the Florence Crittendon homes. In a modern version of such a home, the young woman would receive the kind of prenatal care and diet—meaning, among other things, no drugs, alcohol, and tobacco—that would help children of unwed mothers get off to a better physiological start. Group homes of this sort can also be excellent places to help young women come to grips with their problems and prepare for their futures.

Offer group living for teenage single mothers. Another intriguing suggestion is to extend the Florence Crittendon concept to the period after birth. The mother who keeps her baby is no longer given welfare services, but she is given the option to live in a group home. She and her child receive food and shelter; the mother receives training in parenting and job skills; and the child is in an environment where at least some of the

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adults understand the needs of infants and small children.

• *Maintain a clear bright line short of coercion.* Adoption services or group homes must be purely optional; no young woman should be required to use these services. This bears on a broader point. Having a baby you are not prepared to care for is wrong, but this does not mean that the state has the right to prevent you from doing it—a nice distinction between immoral acts and the state's power to regulate them that could easily be ignored once the Left decides that illegitimacy is a bad thing.

An idea gaining favor—requiring welfare recipients to use Norplant—illustrates the danger. From a legal standpoint, I find nothing objectionable about the idea. Welfare is not a right but largesse, and the state may legitimately place conditions upon dispensing largesse. But once the government requires any use of birth control, a barrier has been broken that has frightening possibilities.

For the same reason, the government must be passive regarding the encouragement of abortion. If enough people think that low-income women should have easier access to abortions, let the subsidies come from the philanthropies that private citizens choose to support. The process of ending welfare must unambiguously represent a withdrawal of the state from personal decisions, not new intrusions.

• *Enforce the existing laws on child neglect.* One of the most common questions about ending welfare is, "What happens to the woman who keeps her baby anyway?" The answer is that some women will indeed choose to keep their babies. As I have already suggested, the self-selection process imposed by the end of welfare also means that such women are likely to be those who have the greatest commitment to their children. They are likely to be the ones who have done the best job of lining up support from relatives and friends, or the ones who have well-paying jobs.

But the main point is that single women who keep their babies will be in exactly the same situation as every other parent who takes a baby home from the hospital: that child is now the parent's responsibility. There is no need to keep a special watch on how a single mother does; rather, she falls under the same laws regarding child neglect and abuse as everyone else, to be enforced in the same way.

AND that, finally, should be the overriding theme of what we do about welfare: treating the human drama of "having a child" as the deeply solemn, responsibility-laden act that it is, and treating all parents the same in their obligation to be good parents. The government does not have the right to prescribe how people shall live or to prevent women from having babies. It should not have the right even to encourage certain women to have babies through the granting of favors. But for 60 years the government has been granting those favors, and thereby intervening in a process that human communities know how to regulate much better than governments do. Welfare for single mothers has been destructive beyond measure, and should stop forthwith.

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Countercultures

Irving Kristol

THE counterculture that emerged in the United States in the 1960's—and pretty much simultaneously in all the Western democracies—is certainly one of the most significant events in the last half-century of Western civilization. It has reshaped our educational systems, our arts, our forms of entertainment, our sexual conventions, our moral codes. So it is important that we understand it—more important, indeed, than that we criticize it.

Perhaps the major difficulty in understanding the counterculture is that our conventional modes of analysis, whether social-scientific or journalistic, come up empty. We seek causes, and find none—or we find so many as to discredit the very enterprise of causal analysis. It is fair to say that *nothing happened* to provoke this rebellion—there was no visible crisis, or even any sense of crisis, in the economies, the societies, the politics of the West. Even America's serious involvement in Vietnam, which is frequently pointed to as a cause, will not serve, for the emergence of the counterculture antedated it by several years. And anyway, such a parochial explanation overlooks the international nature of the movement.

The fact is that the counterculture was not "caused," it was born. What happened was internal to our culture and society, not external to it.

The place to begin with any understanding of the counterculture is with its own self-designation *as* a "counterculture." We are dealing here with something that is not just another dissenting movement, not another stylistic revolution accomplished by a new and younger avant-garde, but with a movement that sees itself as *against* culture. It emerged out of an avowed hostility to "culture" itself—and this on the part of intellectuals, professors, and artists. What can that possibly mean?

We can approach its meaning by looking at the idea of "culture" itself—an idea so familiar to us that we tend to think of it as ageless. It is not. It was only in the latter part of the 18th century that the modern idea of "culture" was born, referring to a new, autonomous sector of human activity—a sector in which poets, playwrights, novelists, and thinkers offered an intensity of spiritual experience of a kind no longer provided by traditional religion. Goethe's novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), supposedly caused dozens of suicides all over Europe. The days of religious turmoil were pretty much over; spiritual turmoil was now a "cultural" event.

At about the same time there was born the modern idea of "art." Previously, of course, the arts had existed in all their variety—ornamental, pedagogic, didactic, entertaining. But just as there was no such comprehensive term as "culture," so there was no such comprehensive term as "art." Both of these concepts came into being in order to designate a new self-consciousness, and a new sense of mission.

That mission was secular, humanistic, and redemptory. All traditional ties with religion were severed, in substance if not in form. The sacred was now to be found in culture and art, where "creative geniuses"—two old terms now endowed with a completely new definition—would give meaning to our lives and sustenance to our spiritual aspirations.

There are intellectual laggards who believe that culture and art are still successfully performing this function today. One critic, Susan Sontag, for instance, has written that art is "the nearest thing to a sacramental activity acknowledged by our secular society." But if this was true in the age of T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, and even (perhaps) of Jackson Pollock, it has no relevance to the era of Andy Warhol. Literary critics and art critics used to borrow freely the religious term "epiphany" to describe the intensity of our reactions to the great modernists in literature and painting. The counterculture offers us no such epiphanies, because it is alienated from the modern tradition that created them. The counterculture is "postmodernist."

BOTH the counterculture and its younger twin, postmodernism, then, are a rebellion against culture and art seen as autonomous, secular human activities. It is now felt, quite correctly, that these activities have been emptied of all spiritual substance even while continuing to claim a quasi-sacred mission.

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Inevitably, the very first target of this rebellion was the modern university, which for the past century or so had established itself as the central institution of secular-humanist orthodoxy. The rebellion was spurred on not only by the mass migration of young people to the university after World War II, but by trends over the past century in the world of modern literature and modern art themselves—a world that originated outside the university and, indeed, in opposition to it. In this world, free of institutional constraints, there had emerged, long before the counterculture, what we now call (after the critic Lionel Trilling) the "adversary culture."

That this modern, adversary culture—spanning the century, 1865-1965—was hostile to bourgeois society was obvious enough. That it was also, in a deeper sense, hostile to secular humanism was not so obvious, even to many of those involved in the adversary culture itself. Yet in retrospect it is clear that, with hardly an exception, the leading novelists, poets, and painters—those whom we now call the "moderns" (Eliot, Yeats, Kafka, Proust, Picasso)—could not be enlisted in a secular-humanist canon.

Oddly enough, one who saw this early on, and most clearly, was the Marxist critic and philosopher Georg Lukacs. For Lukacs, the adversary art and literature of the bourgeois West offered a clear sign of an impending cultural crisis that would accompany the general crisis of "capitalism." (What Lukacs did not understand, of course, was that Marxism, precisely because it was so much more radical a version of modern secular humanism, was destined to experience an even more shattering crisis.)

In the 1960's, in any event, the counterculture started to recruit adherents among junior faculty on American campuses. The professors who constituted the senior faculty, although a majority, were the last to understand—most, in truth, still do not understand—what was going on. Together with most commentators in the media, they kept looking for proximate causes of the students' discontents, and persisted in trying to appease those discontents.

Lionel Trilling once referred to "the humanist belief that society can change itself gradually by taking thought and revising sensibility." This is exactly how our professoriate responded, offering all kinds of institutional reforms and procedural concessions, blissfully unaware that it was being attacked for what it was, not for anything in particular that it did. Comfortable in the orthodox humanism incarnated in their institution, the university, these professors could not credit what many of their brightest students believed: namely, that, thanks to secular humanism, the university had become a soulless institution, an institution without any transcendent meaning. Nor did they understand that it is in the nature of things for an institution which has lost its soul to be experienced as "oppressive," even though thoughts of oppression may be the farthest distance from the oppressor's (or professor's) mind.

In their misconception, the professors were aided and abetted by the students themselves, who, grossly undereducated in the American fashion, and despite the efforts of their mentors among the junior faculty, found it all but impossible to formulate or even to comprehend their own discontents. ("Nietzsche is peachy" is as close as many of them came to articulateness.) One gets a deeper insight by listening to the better educated and intellectually more sophisticated French students who, in 1968, actually came close to making a revolution. They spelled out their message in graffiti on the walls of the Sorbonne: "All power to the imagination," "Real life is elsewhere," "Art is dead, let us create everyday life."

Nevertheless, American students too, just like the French, were undergoing an existential-spiritual crisis, a crisis revealed in their turbulent sexuality, their drug addiction, their desperate efforts to invent new "lifestyles," and their popular music, at once Dionysiac and mournful.

We in our secular, rationalist world are utterly unprepared for such existential-spiritual spasms. For one thing, we do not study the history of religion in any serious way, even for explanations of religious phenomena. Instead, we look for sociological explanations, or economic explanations, or even political explanations, and we do so precisely because we find it almost impossible to posit spiritual appetites and spiritual passions as independent, primary forces in human history.

Yet they are, or they can be. Take the rise of Puritanism in Elizabethan England, Shakespeare's England. At that time the Church of England was the most tolerant of all national churches. It was a church with a beautiful liturgy and a host of first-rate thinkers. And England itself was the most prosperous and the freest society in the Western world, with a glorious secular culture. So why should people, especially young people among whom were many women, suddenly decide that they wanted to be, of all things, Puritans?

All one can say is that these things happen, that the spirit bloweth where it listeth, and that sometimes all you need to generate a counterculture is an orthodoxy against which it can rebel. For no orthodoxy can ever fully satisfy our spiritual appetites and our spiritual passions.

The granddaddy of all countercultures, of course, was early Christianity itself. And in a polemic written in the 2nd century by the Greek philosopher Celsus, we have a marvelous document of the bewilderment and incomprehension with which Greco-Roman rationalists of the early Christian era viewed this counterculture. All copies of this polemic were eventually destroyed by the Church, but we have the rebuttal to it, *Contra*

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Celsum, by the Church Father Origen. From this rejoinder, the 19th-century British historian and rationalist, James Anthony Froude, wrote an essay reconstructing Celsus's argument.

And what was Celsus saying? He was saying that it was absurd for people to go around believing in miracles, believing that a god-man had been buried and then resurrected, when such things were an affront to reason and utterly impossible. Celsus's baffled critique of Christianity made all the sense in the world, if by sense one means pure rationality. His was philosophy's response to Christian dogma and Christian faith. But philosophy, inherently rationalist, is always disarmed by religion when it is not simply ignored by religion—just as our own academic, rationalist culture is disarmed or ignored by our counterculture.

The countercultural rejoinder to today's rationalist, like the early Christian response to Celsus, is always something like, "You just don't understand." That is not, technically, an argument. But it is a powerful and, for some, a persuasive way of ending the discussion, and ending the discussion is, precisely, the goal of a counterculture, which always aims to create a new vocabulary, establish new terms, mark new parameters of discourse—in short, to forge a new human and social reality.

It rarely succeeds, however; an orthodoxy has far greater staying power than a counterculture. And even when it does succeed, it creates, willy-nilly, a new orthodoxy of its own.

There have been only two such orthodoxies, enduring orthodoxies, in the history of Western civilization, and both of them began as countercultures. They are Christianity and secular, rationalist humanism. Obviously, creating a new orthodoxy is very hard. But even when countercultures do not eventuate in a new orthodoxy, they still have an effect, sometimes a lasting effect; the world is never quite the same again when they have done their work, and neither is orthodoxy.

COUNTERCULTURAL challenges to orthodoxy take different forms at different times, but a common substratum of attitudes and belief is discernible.

To begin with, there is the experience of what we now glibly call alienation, and all the forms in which this experience is expressed. Not to feel alienated is, from the point of view of the counterculture, to be "inauthentic," to be deficient in a fully human sensibility. We have witnessed this phenomenon among the intellectual and artistic classes in the West over the past 100 years, and the notion of the alienated intellectual and artist is, by now, so familiar that we read it backward into history.

This is a misreading, however. It makes no sense to regard Bach and Mozart, Titian and Raphael, Dante and Shakespeare as alienated from the civilization in which they lived. They were, one supposes, discontented often enough, and critical often enough. But mere discontent, and normal criticism of the actual from the viewpoint of the ideal, do not add up to alienation, which is a far more profound experience—the experience of being homeless in a world created by orthodoxy.

Associated with this sense of alienation is a corresponding sense of indignation, even outrage, at the orthodoxy which is perceived to be the ground of the alienation. It is this indignation at what is felt to be intolerable that unites people into a countercultural *movement*, as distinct from a collection of tormented individuals, or a mere school of thought. And as all movements seek power, including countercultural ones, this in turn leads to conflict. It is astonishing how frequently the defenders of orthodoxy fail to see that power is at issue, and deceive themselves into believing that a benign, therapeutic approach can pacify the passions of indignant alienation.

And then there is sex, always sex. "Sexual liberation" is always very near the top of a countercultural agenda—though just what form the liberation takes can and does vary, sometimes quite wildly. Women's liberation, likewise, is another consistent feature of all countercultural movements—liberation from husbands, liberation from children, liberation from family. Indeed, the real object of these various sexual heterodoxies is to disestablish the family as the central institution of human society, the citadel of orthodoxy.

Just how one goes about such disestablishment is of secondary importance, though it is of very keen interest to the participants. Thus, at one end of the spectrum, there have been countercultural movements that promoted sexual promiscuity, on the grounds that the members of the movement are of the "elect," the already redeemed who have recaptured humanity's lost innocence. At the other end of the spectrum there have been countercultural movements that have preached and practiced abstinence. What we call Catholic monasticism was such a movement.

In her wonderful novel *The Abyss*, Marguerite Yourcenar deals with the disastrous Anabaptist rebellion in Germany in the 1520's. The origins of the Anabaptist sect lay in a medieval heretical movement called the Brethren of the Free Spirit (at various times it had other names), which emphasized spiritual Christianity as against organized, institutionalized Christianity, and preached spiritual devotion as against orthodox piety. The Brethren also deplored sex and the family as distractions from the realm of the spirit.

For all these reasons, the Church quite ruthlessly suppressed the Anabaptist movement. But the impulse kept bubbling up for some two centuries, and at one point the movement became sufficiently numerous to gain control of the city of Münster. There, the wheel quickly came full circle, and soon Münster was notorious for its

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uncontrolled licentiousness—after all, there is a very fine line between absolute sexual purity and utter sexual licentiousness, and human beings, especially if they are bereft of institutional guidance and support, can easily lose their balance.

In the end, the German secular authorities laid siege to the city and, after some months, conquered it, slaughtering the inhabitants. In this, the princes had the blessing of Martin Luther, who (like John Calvin) was a staunch defender of the family and sought—and achieved—not a liberation from orthodoxy but a reformation of the prevailing one. Today no one is more emphatic in defense of the family than our own Baptists, who have inherited the anti-institutional animus of their forebears but little else of their counterculture.

WHICH leads us to another, more recent, attempt to undermine the family.

We have witnessed in our time the extraordinary collapse of Soviet Communism. Most analyses of that collapse have focused on the disaster that inevitably accompanies efforts to create a centralized, planned economy. These analyses are convincing, but I do not think they tell the whole story.

One need not have known a great deal about the theory of free-market economics to have been convinced that Soviet religious doctrine—described, somewhat redundantly but accurately enough, as "godless, atheistic materialism"—could never sink roots among the Russian people. All people, everywhere, at all times, are "theotropic" beings, who cannot long abide the absence of a transcendental dimension to their lives. The collapse of Soviet Communism vindicates this truth.

And there is another point to be made here, which pertains not only to 20th-century Communism in practice but to socialist doctrine as a whole. This body of thought has always been hostile to the family as an institution, not only because the family is *the* crucial vehicle for the transmission of specific ideas and values, but because it is in the family that the very sense of tradition, the basic human instinct of piety toward an ancestral past, is preserved and conveyed. In seeking to create a brave new world, socialism of necessity subverts tradition and celebrates impiety. It agrees with Tom Paine, a pre-socialist thinker, that the dead are a "nonentity," that we should "let the dead bury the dead," and that we must resist "the vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave."

In the early socialist credo, contempt for the family was universal. All the thinkers whom, following Marx's usage, we call "utopian socialists" were agreed on this point, although they approached it from different angles. William Godwin in England professed to despise not only marriage and the family but also sexuality, arguing that the truly rational man would be liberated from such lowly passions. In France, on the other hand, Charles Fourier insisted that in *his* ideal communities, sex would be absolutely free, and that as a result of such liberation of the passions, men and women would live to 144 years of age, 120 of which would be spent in active love-making. A nut, one might say; but Fourier was respected and influential throughout Europe and even among transcendentalist circles in the United States. When in the grip of a countercultural passion, one can easily lose or repress the ability to distinguish the nutty from the sensible.

When I taught a graduate seminar in social thought, my classes tended to be dominated by young Marxists and quasi-Marxists. We used to read *The Communist Manifesto*, in which Marx launches a vitriolic attack on the bourgeois family as an institution of legalized prostitution for the unfortunate wives. I once asked my students what they thought of these remarks but got no response—it was clear that they preferred not to think about them, though they regarded *The Communist Manifesto* as a kind of scripture. I then asked whether they thought their mothers were prostitutes. An uneasy and baffled silence ensued. What I found and still find fascinating is less the fact that no one had the courage to say "yes" than the fact that no one had the courage to say "no." Keeping their Marxism intact was obviously more important to them than anything else.

But setting aside the mental contortions of believers, it remains true that one of the inherent weaknesses of even moderate socialist movements and governments is this ingrained hostility to the family. We are coming to recognize that this hostility, now cloaked as indifference, is a major factor in the political torment of what we still call "liberalism" in the United States. That the hostility is there is revealed by the complaisance of liberalism before the assaults on the family by contemporary radical feminism and the "gay-rights" movement. All liberal politicians today feel it necessary to speak highly of the family, but they cannot bring themselves to defend it against its enemies.

AND what about our own orthodoxy, the secular, humanist, rationalist orthodoxy against which all the countercultures of the past two centuries—from romanticism through modernism to postmodernism—have rebelled? How has it been coping?

On the whole, it has been coping badly, its survival ensured mainly by its toleration of older religious and moral traditions that still govern, however uncertainly, the lives of most citizens, and by its unqualified faith in progress, material *and* moral—a faith that is grievously wounded but not yet dead.

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Because of this faith in progress, our modern orthodoxy has been enabled to ignore the basic principle of any orthodoxy, which is virtue (a principle that all countercultures find intolerable). The word itself has suffered a degradation in our time. As the philosopher Leo Strauss once pointed out, a term that used to refer to the manliness of men came to be limited in its reference to the sexual purity of women—and now even that meaning has, as it were, fallen.

Orthodox virtue is a prescription whereby people find contentment in their lives by doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, and in the right frame of mind. The last qualification is the weakest of the four: all orthodoxies believe that if you do the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, you will probably end up in possession of the right frame of mind. (That is why orthodoxy is always suspicious of those who go around talking enthusiastically about "spirituality.") Orthodoxies have known forever that virtue is a practical, existential discipline, not simply a matter of faith, and definitely not an application of abstract doctrine to behavior.

Beneath the priority that orthodoxy gives to right practice lies a basic, primordial intuition: that the world is meant to be a home for mankind. Leading a life according to virtue is therefore of metaphysical significance. In pursuing the ethical sanctification of the mundane, virtuous practice gains strength by linking the living to the dead and to the unborn. In a traditional orthodox community, both the dead and the unborn have the right to vote.

But *our* orthodoxy is essentially contemptuous of the very idea of tradition; this it has in common with its offshoot, socialism. It also lacks a central principle of virtue. Instead, it proposes a whole set of virtues, the "liberal" virtues—toleration, pluralism, relativism—which, one might say, construct a supermarket of possible good and decent lives. This is a prescription for moral anarchy, which is exactly what we are now experiencing. And there is no way that moral anarchy can pass for moral progress, though there are today, especially in our educational system, a fair number of people who pretend that it can.

And so we come full circle. I began by noting that today's postmodernist counterculture grew out of trends in modernist culture itself, whose works it disdains but whose work it continues. Essentially, postmodernism's critique of modernism is that it is "academic," seemingly designed from the outset to constitute a "canon." And our current counterculture is opposed to canons, just as it is opposed to Culture (with a capital "C") and to Art (with a capital "A").

In the poets and painters of the previous adversary culture, there was to be found an intense spiritual energy, an energy derived from their overweening ambition to have art replace religion as that which gives meaning to our lives. The ethos of our current counterculture is, instead, the ethos of a carnival. It is cynical, nihilistic, and exploitative; it is candidly sensationalistic and materialistic.

The energy of the postmodern counterculture goes into self-promotion, public relations, and grant-seeking. In this respect, the counterculture has become an extension of the modern media, favoring exhibitionism in place of intellectual or spiritual ambition. Shopping for, not whoring after, strange gods is the order of day.

Can it last? The original excitement of the counterculture is certainly gone; there is already a sense of tedium about the whole business—too many "lifestyles," too many transient "protean" selves.

But that does not mean that things will return to "normal." The real danger, it seems to me, is that the collapse of secular humanism signaled by the rise of the counterculture will bring down with it—will discredit—human things that are of permanent importance. A spiritual rebellion against the constrictions of secular humanism could end up—in some way, it has already ended up—in a celebration of irrationalism and a derogation of reason itself. In these circumstances, the liberal idea of liberty could collapse under pressure from a new spiritual and ideological conformity that rushes in where liberals fear to tread.

Countercultures are dangerous phenomena even as they are inevitable. Their destructive power always far exceeds their constructive power. The delicate task that faces our civilization today is not to reform the secular, rationalist orthodoxy, which has passed beyond the point of redemption. Rather, it is to breathe new life into the older, now largely comatose, religious orthodoxies—while resisting the counterculture as best we can, adapting to it and reshaping it where we cannot simply resist.

Resistance is important because it buys time during which the contradictory and self-destructive impulses of the counterculture can work themselves out. (The current conflict between pro-lesbian feminism and an older "sexual liberation" is a case in point.) At the same time, we have to recognize that some ground may never be recovered. And as for breathing new life into the spirit of older orthodoxies, it must be said that no one can foresee how that would happen, what it would entail, and in what ways a newly-inspirited religious orthodoxy would differ from the old.

We have to be prepared for surprises—not all of them, perhaps, to our liking. But, historically, this is the way the clash between orthodoxy and counterculture has always been resolved.

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Redford's Van Doren & Mine

Joseph Epstein

WHEN I read that Robert Redford was about to release a movie about the 1950's quiz-show scandals, my first thought was: poor Charlie, poor damned—possibly genuinely damned—Charlie. Charlie, of course, is Charles Van Doren, the central if by no means major figure in those scandals. I worked with Charlie between 1965 and 1970 in Chicago, where he was in effect in exile, and found him, and his position as a national pariah, of keen interest.

Charles Van Doren has had to bear a heavy load as a symbol for much that was wrong with America in the 1950's and, for those who like to push these things a bit further, for much more that would continue to go wrong later. The appearance of the Redford movie, *Quiz Show*, would mean, among other things, once more against the firing-squad wall for Charlie, who is now nearing seventy: an opportunity for every moralizing wiseguy to fire off a few more rounds of the journalistic equivalent of rotten tomatoes at him. Being a pariah in America is not only a full-time job but, apparently, one from which no retirement short of death can be expected.

NOT many people under forty-five today can have much recollection of the excitement of the quiz shows of the 1950's and the immense stir that followed the revelation that most of these shows had been fixed, the contestants having been picked for their telegenic qualities and supplied with the questions and answers in advance, and the contests themselves being staged for the maximum dramatic effect. *Twenty-One*, on which Charlie would win $129,000—very serious bread in those days—was seen on Monday nights on NBC, going up against *I Love Lucy* on CBS.

In Redford's often cartoonish movie, people come thundering out of the subway, rushing home to watch *Twenty-One*, and even nuns are shown posted before their television set when it is on. But it is true that the quiz shows—*The $64,000 Question*, *The $64,000 Challenge*, *Dotto*, *Tic Tac Dough*, *Concentration*, and *Twenty-One* above all—did seem, between 1955 and 1958, a dominating presence on American television and hence in American life. Charlie was on the cover of *Time* ("Quiz Champ Van Doren") on February 11, 1957—Leonard Bernstein was the magazine's cover subject the week before and Martin Luther King, Jr. the week after—and on the cover of *Life* on October 26, 1959, when the scandal broke.

The $64,000 Question, begun on CBS in June 1955 and sponsored by Revlon, preceded NBC's *Twenty-One*, which was sponsored by Geritol, a mixture of vitamins, minerals, and alcohol that claimed to be an antidote for "tired blood." *The $64,000 Question* was a more high-rolling version of the radio show known as *The $64 Question*. Unlike *Twenty-One*, which presumably tested generalized knowledge, *The $64,000 Question* tested highly specialized knowledge, and the odder the contestants, it seemed, the better the ratings: a shoemaker who knew opera, for example; a marine officer who knew French cuisine; or a woman psychologist (Joyce Brothers) who knew boxing. But technical differences between the two shows aside, there was, theoretically, no limit to how much money one could win on *Twenty-One*, whereas the limit on *The $64,000 Question* was set by the show's title. Both shows had booming ratings and sold their sponsors products wonderfully well.

Set up to compete with *The $64,000 Question*, *Twenty-One* soon blew it off the court. It did so when Charles Van Doren, then a thirty-year-old instructor from Columbia University, appeared on the show to defeat a rather klutzy New Yorker from Forest Hills named Herbert Stempel. Charlie stayed on for 15 weeks, sweating and hesitating, palpably cerebrating before 30 or 40 million people, but finally always coming up with the correct answers. "Charlie," his mother wrote before the scandals hit, "turned out to have that mysterious chemical attraction which inspires multitudes." He was tall, just missed being good-looking, spoke in a cultivated accent, and gave off an aroma of learning and intelligence without any of the fumes of snobbery that in America so often seemed to go with it.

When Charlie appeared on *Twenty-One*, it almost seemed as if his family had gone along with

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him into the "isolation booth," as the glass cage was called where contestants stood awaiting their questions. And it was quite a family. Charlie's father was Mark Van Doren, who looked like nothing so much as an Americanized Mr. Chips and was a famous professor at Columbia, as well as a Pulitzer Prize poet and a prominent literary critic. (At Columbia, Charlie and his father shared an office.) Charlie's mother, Dorothy, who had been an editor at the *Nation*, wrote pleasant little books about the comic hardships of life in the country or of living with a professor. His Aunt Irita was something of a power in publishing as a literary editor at the *New York Herald-Tribune*. Perhaps most impressive of all was his Uncle Carl, a man of letters and the author of the best available biography of Benjamin Franklin (another Pulitzer Prize). The Van Dorens were not a patrician but a Midwestern family—Mark Van Doren had gone to the University of Illinois—and its intellectual members had achieved what they had not through social connections but through talent and hard work.

When Charlie sprang into the national consciousness, that nice young man who seemed to have all the answers, it was as if he had been sent over by central casting. In a strong sense, he had. "The principle of careful casting," as one of the quiz-show producers once called it, was essential to their success. What was wanted was contestants who were brainy but not dull: bouncy young woman lawyers, like the one who ultimately replaced Charlie on *Twenty-One*, or interestingly odd people, or people who looked as if they were themselves of the people. When the producers saw Charlie they sensed they had glommed onto a Henry Fonda with the mind of an Einstein.

Although other contestants made more money than Charlie—a Columbia graduate student in sociology named Elfrida Von Nardroff, who appeared on the show after him, topped out at $226,500—none achieved anything near his celebrity. There was nothing nerdish, nothing Bronx High School of Science (where Herbert Stempel had gone), nothing neurotic about Charlie. He was very American—he looked as if he could have played on our Davis Cup tennis team—except for his immense knowledgeability. Mothers, it was said, saw him as the answer to Elvis Presley. The Russians had launched Sputnik, the first satellite in space, the same year that Charlie was on *Twenty-One*; in some quarters, Charlie was thought to be our answer to Sputnik.

He was great copy. *Time*, in its cover story, noted: "Along with [his] charm, he combines the universal erudition of a Renaissance man with the nerve and cunning of a riverboat gambler and the showmanship of the born actor." Some *Time* editor must have enjoyed describing Charlie in his isolation booth: "Clamped in a vise of earphones, the eyes roll heavenward and squeeze shut, the brow sweats and furrows, the teeth gnaw at the lower lip." Faculty members at St. John's College, in Annapolis, where Charlie had been an undergraduate, pointed out, according to *Time*, that "Van Doren's mind comes through on TV not as a card-index file but as a reasoning instrument that explores a memory clearly embedded in taste." It was a complete fake, every moment of it, but a hell of a performance.

THE first time I met Charlie I had to shake off the red borders of an imaginary *Time* cover to get him into proper focus. He looked remarkably like himself, which is to say like the man I had watched all those Monday nights, marveling at his knowledgeability and his cool instincts ("I have always been a gambler," he told *Life*). This meeting took place at Encyclopaedia Britannica, where I had recently been hired as a senior editor, and where Charlie worked directly for the man who was to give the new Brittanica its intellectual design, Mortimer J. Adler, in an office Adler called, with no mean pretensions, the Institute for Philosophical Research.

The Institute, among its other activities, planned to turn out books on each of the 102 "Great Ideas," the organizing principle of the "Syntopicon," which was itself an elaborate index sold with Britannica's "Great Books"; this was an old Adler project that Dwight Macdonald once called "The Book-of-the-Millennium Club." Charlie was writing a book for Adler, to be titled, with (I thought at the time) more than a touch of irony, *The Idea of Progress*. The irony came with the fact that no one's progress had been stopped colder than Charlie's after what was already known to history as "the quiz-show scandal."

To be so famous, and yet to have one's fame take the character of pure notoriety, as did Charlie's, left him with a peculiar social burden upon meeting new people. He had to consider the possibility that the person before him might despise him. I met him in 1965, just six years after the scandal had blown Charlie out of the water. He could not, after all, pretend that his past did not matter.

Charlie handled our meeting beautifully, I thought. We were at lunch, with two other Britannica editors, and I mentioned that I had bought a house on which I was to close that afternoon. "Ah," said Charlie, with the smile that came so easily to him, "the last time I closed on a house, in New York, I had two jobs, one at NBC and one at Columbia, and the very next day I had neither."

After the scandal, Charlie had indeed been fired from his job as an assistant professor at Columbia, over the protest of many students, who felt he deserved a break. It seems unlikely that any teaching or other serious intellectual work

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was then available to him. Charlie got the job he now had thanks to Mortimer Adler's friendship with Mark Van Doren. Adler was part of a little network of men who had gone to or taught at Columbia, among whom were Mark Van Doren, Joseph Wood Krutch, and Clifton Fadiman.

Charlie remained in Chicago for twenty or so years. Chicago must, at times, have felt to him like being in Novosibirsk, in western Siberia. He had left the good life in New York, where he owned a red Mercedes convertible and a townhouse in the Village, and had a regular slot on Dave Garroway's *Today* show, for which he was paid the then-princely sum of $50,000 a year. Before the scandal exploded, he must have felt himself in the condition of Herbert von Karajan, who, when asked by a cab driver in Paris where he wished to go, is supposed to have replied, "It doesn't matter. They want me everywhere."

As befits an exile, Charlie lay low, never becoming a figure of any sort in Chicago. How could he have done? His position was still that of a major national phony. This man, who was supposed to bring renewed respect for learning to the masses through his television performance, had instead besmirched everything by partaking in the general fraudulence. I remember once getting into an argument with Charlie over some now-forgotten political issue; as it began to heat up, I realized that we would both do well to back away. Like almost everyone else in the country, I began with too great a moral advantage over him.

Charlie was not married when he was a contestant on *Twenty-One*, but not long after he married a Jewish woman, Geraldine or Gerry, whom it was said that Charlie's scandal had come near to crushing. Her Jewishness is worth remarking, for in *Quiz Show*, Robert Redford makes much of the Jewish-Gentile rivalrousness that his screenwriter, Paul Attanasio, has inserted as one of the main subthemes of the movie. The Stempel-Van Doren match-up is played in the movie as the aggressive Jewish neurotic *schlemiel* (to put it kindly) versus the cool Wasp nonpareil. In reality, when Stempel was told he would have to take a dive and lose to Charlie, he begged that the two of them be allowed to play the game straight, no falsity whatever, a match between CCNY and Columbia, which in retrospect seems a sad little demonstration of school spirit.

WHAT one may be permitted to call the Jewish aura of *Quiz Show* runs deep throughout the movie. It begins with Richard Goodwin (played by Rob Morrow), a young Harvard-trained lawyer working for the House subcommittee on legislative oversight, who picks up on the quiz-show scandals when stories about disgruntled contestants begin appearing in the press and decides to investigate them on behalf of the subcommittee, headed by Congressman Oren Harris of Arkansas. In the movie, Goodwin—a chapter of whose book, *Remembering the Sixties*, is the only work cited as the basis for the screenplay—is made to seem the man most ardently in pursuit of showing up the dishonesty of the quiz shows. In fact, the one who did the most to break the scandals was Joseph Stone, who worked for New York District Attorney Frank Hogan. But dramatic necessity, I suppose, required falsifying history, so that in the movie Charlie has only a single, obsessive pursuer.

The Goodwin character is portrayed as an aggressive Jew, first in his class at the Harvard Law School, formerly a clerk to Felix Frankfurter, scruffy, not from Boston but, as he at one point explains, from (Jewish) Brookline. With Stempel (played by John Turturro) wanting to bring Charlie down out of what is made to seem an almost racial jealousy, and with Goodwin after him out of a sometimes ambivalent but ultimately moral zealousness, poor Charlie (played by Ralph Fiennes) is made to seem rather a Wasp sandwich.

Herb Stempel, who is a walking ADL nightmare—aggressive, crazed, showing a blackened tooth—at one point refers to Van Doren as "that big uncircumcised *putz*"; and, after he learns that he has to lose to Charlie, he responds to a television promo for the forthcoming *Twenty-One* show by muttering, "Tune in and watch Charles Van Doren eat his first kosher meal. . . ." As for Goodwin, when he shows himself soft on Charlie, his wife—a "*shikse*," as she is described in the screenplay—eggs him on by calling him a betrayer of his people, "the Uncle Tom of the Jews." That the producers of *Twenty-One* were also Jews, and fairly lubricious ones as portrayed here, makes the entire movie at times seem as if it might deserve the title, "Get the Gentile."

ALONG with its Jew-Wasp theme, *Quiz Show* is intent on demonstrating the corruption of big-time capitalism. Robert Redford has said that he sees his movie as a "parable" of "the eternal struggle between ethics and capitalism." Let it be noted that in putting this parable on the screen, he does not at any time let the ethics of art get in his way. The characters in his movie who represent capitalism, from then-NBC vice president Robert Kintner to the producers of *Twenty-One* to a New York judge who does not release the findings of a grand-jury inquiry into the quiz shows, range as human types from the greasy to the gross.

The larger implication of *Quiz Show* is that the fix is in, and we little people, none of us, has a chance against the big boys. The big boys are the capitalists, and they are insidious. The owner of Geritol (played in the movie by the director Martin Scorsese) directs the producers of *Twenty-One* to knock Herbert Stempel off the show because

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the ratings are slipping. The judge, in not allowing the grand jury's findings to be either officially filed or published, is implicitly in cahoots with the networks and producers. Robert Kintner plays golf with Oren Harris.

Everything, in short, is a done deal. True, maybe everything always was, but now the big boys have the ultimate weapon for controlling the nation—television. The last line of dialogue in *Quiz Show* goes to the Richard Goodwin character: "I thought I was gonna get television. The truth is, television is gonna get us." And that, as they say in the business, is a wrap.

Apart from the irony of making a movie, in some ways the quintessential capitalistic enterprise, to expose capitalism, the political naiveté, not to say pessimism, of *Quiz Show* is impressive. One has to be a fool to be unaware of the possibility of corruption in any enterprise where big money is at stake; and very big money hung on the quiz-show ratings. Even if the sponsors did go along with the cheating perpetrated by the shows' producers—and there is no conclusive evidence that they did—one may be outraged but one ought not be shocked. Behind every great family fortune, as Balzac reminded us many years ago, there is usually a crime.

But the larger point, it seems to me, is that the quiz-show scandals are today known as just that—scandals. And they are scandals because the legal system, and men of impressive integrity such as Joseph Stone and Frank Hogan, sensed their scandalousness and, under the existing capitalist order, shut them down.

A FINAL underlying theme in *Quiz Show* has to do with Charlie and his once-famous father. In the movie, this story is toyed with but ultimately scamped as only a movie is permitted to scamp serious material. The intellectual distinction of Charlie's lineage is tricked out in italics. When Richard Goodwin first learns that Charles Van Doren is to be on *Twenty-One*, he asks his wife: "Van Doren like Van Doren Van Doren?" Mark Van Doren is played in the movie by Paul Scofield, and played, let it be said, magnificently: not a steely gray hair out of place, not a syllable mis-accented, splendidly distinguished and handsomely out of it, a combination only an Ivy League academic of a certain era could command.

In the movie, Charlie shows, as one critic has put it, "a fierce ambivalence about a powerful father." Charlie, we learn, at one point left Cambridge to go off to Paris where he wrote a novel about a patricide. But Mark Van Doren is not portrayed as a crushing father; instead he is an almost too-good father whose attention is nonetheless difficult to hold and whose respect is difficult to win. In actuality, with his gray hair, with a face craggy not through dissipation but through, one assumed, the wisdom that comes of intellectual effort, the real Mark Van Doren seems not only to have looked like but to have been a great many people's ideal father. (Considerable, I know, is the number of not very good student poets he encouraged while at Columbia who, alas, still walk the streets intent on a career in poetry.)

It must have been more than a bit tricky to have Mark Van Doren as one's father. His evident superiority could not have been all that easy to live with. Throughout the movie, Charlie, troubled by his cheating on *Twenty-One*, cannot seem to get his father's notice long enough to offer an explanation of his situation and perhaps fire off a confession into the bargain. When he brings up the possibility that there has been cheating on the shows, his father, mildly amused at the notion, retorts that cheating on a television quiz show is "like plagiarizing a comic book." In the movie, one has the sense that Charlie is not quite taken seriously—or seriously enough—by his father, whose main concern about his son's appearances on television is that it might detract from his commitment to teaching.

In Joseph Stone's excellent and thorough book on the quiz-show scandals, *Prime Time and Misdemeanors*, the producer Albert Freedman, when he finally confessed to having fixed *Twenty-One* by supplying the contestants with answers, was told by Charlie that "the impact of exposure would be disastrous—it would destroy his family, might even kill his father." But when Charlie himself finally confessed before the Harris subcommittee in Congress, Mark Van Doren reportedly said that it was the proudest day of his life. Even understanding fully the intention behind that sentence, one begs to doubt its truth. In any case, one has the sense that the relationship between Charlie and his father was vastly more complicated than is suggested in Redford's movie.

I WAS never a close friend of Charlie's, but during the years I was at Britannica I once had dinner at his home, where I remember him reciting a poem over the wine, an amusingly pretentious little touch. I also remember liking his wife, who I thought showed signs of psychological fragility but who obviously loved her husband. I once went to a small party where Charlie showed up wearing beads; the time was the sizzling 60's, remember.

While at Britannica I spent hundreds of hours in a large conference room with ten or twelve other senior editors, of whom Charlie had become, in effect, one; and I had a chance to watch his mind at work. It will seem a comically obvious thing to say about the world's most famous quiz-show contestant, but Charlie actually knew quite a lot. After his undergraduate education at St. John's, he had set out to become an astrophysicist, though somewhere along the line he reined

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in his intellectual ambition and settled for a master's degree in mathematics. Later he would do a Ph.D. in English literature.

What I found impressive about Charlie was the range of his random information. He seemed to know a good deal about Indian tribes and geology and Boolean algebra; how deep his knowledge of any of these things went, I am not sure, but he could talk a decently good game. Perhaps this came from growing up in so intensely bookish a home.*

Yet, much as he possessed an impressive range of factual knowledge, nothing in Charlie seemed to tie any of it together. He was cultivated and knowledgeable without being in the least intellectual. If Charlie had any ideas, he kept them hidden. If he had any true intellectual passions, these remained his private possession. If he had any politics, he tended to keep these, too, to himself—though later, when the tumult of the late 1960's got well under way, I came across a pamphlet of political pieces by Midwestern academics and journalists on the Left to which Charlie had contributed a small bouquet of platitudes of the day. Charlie's mother and father, after all, had both worked on the *Nation*, and I have been told that Mark Van Doren went for Henry Wallace in the 1948 presidential election.

One of the reasons I never became closer to Charlie at Britannica is that he was too much Mortimer J. Adler's man. The other senior editors at the corporation were united by their mockery of the project for which they had been hired—a replanning of the entire encyclopedia, beginning with a Rube Goldberg-like index of world knowledge—and on which Adler, a kind of mad prince of logic, rode herd. Charlie never disagreed with Adler, whereas disagreement with and behind-his-back disparagement of Adler gave the rest of us what camaraderie we enjoyed.

Still, I never noted in Charlie any resentment, either of his situation or of those colleagues whose contempt he must have sensed. (I am a little ashamed of my own failure of imagination in not taking into consideration Charlie's impossible position as a family man with no other work open to him.) If he had any side or meanness to him, I never saw or felt it. In *Quiz Show*, Ralph Fiennes has nicely caught the quality in the Charlie I knew of bemused self-contentment. It combines, this quality, detached curiosity about the world and yet absolutely no doubt concerning one's deserved place in it.

Charlie was resilient, a survivor. Richard Goodwin, in his chapter on the quiz shows in *Remembering America*, quotes a letter written to him by Charlie after the congressional guillotine had fallen. The final paragraph reads:

> There have been many hard things. But I am trying to tell you that we [he and his wife] will live and thrive, I think—I mean I know we will live and I think we will thrive—and that you must never, in any way, feel any regret for your part in this. Perhaps it is nonsense to say this, but I thought it might be just possible that you would.

Charlie did of course live, and, materially, he throve. He and his wife raised a family. He eventually became an important vice president at Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. He was a skier; he played tennis. He was a good-time Charlie. Some years ago, I believe I heard someone say that he bought a place in Italy, or Switzerland. He retired early to his family home in Connecticut.

The passage of years had assuaged Charlie's notoriety. Generations have come into being to whom the quiz-show scandals are not even a memory, and for whom the name Charles Van Doren does not mean much, and that of his once distinguished family even less. (Charlie has long been more famous than Mark or any other Van Doren.) Charlie could actually look forward to meeting people who had not the foggiest notion of his past. Until, that is, Robert Redford and Paul Attanasio had this bright idea for a movie that has brought it all back.

LOOKING at Charlie in those meetings at Britannica, I used to wonder what might have happened had the scandal never blown up on him. Difficult to fix the limits here. He could, when still young, have been made the editor of Encyclopaedia Britannica, or the head of the Book-of-the-Month Club, or some other highly profitable middlebrow institution. A university presidency was a distinct possibility. A political career was not, I suppose, out of the question. Had the blade not fallen, Charlie would almost certainly have been heard from during the 60's. He might have stayed in television and become a major-network version of Bill Moyers, doing a kind of intellectual talk show.

By the same token, without Charlie, I believe, the quiz shows would not have been quite so popular nor the scandals have loomed so large. Although contestants on the various shows included Xavier Cougat, the eleven-year-old actress Patty Duke, and Joyce Brothers, although Leonard Bernstein's sister Shirley was one of the producers of *The $64,000 Question*, and although some contestants won a good deal more money than he, Charlie was nevertheless correct when, in his confession before Oren Harris's subcommittee, he said that he "was the principal symbol" of the

* Even this would never have been enough for Charlie to have come through as stupendously as he seemed to do on *Twenty-One*. As Edward Jurist, one of the producers of the 50's quiz show *Dotto*, told Joseph Stone, the world of information is so vast that nobody could be expected to answer more than two of ten randomly asked questions: "You cannot ask random questions of people and have a show. You simply have failure, failure, failure, and that does not make for entertainment."

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entire extravaganza. When Richard Goodwin, in the hope of protecting Charlie, spoke with Felix Frankfurter about the possibility of excluding him from the congressional hearings, Frankfurter rightly retorted, "It would be like playing *Hamlet* without Hamlet."

Charlie Van Doren, a teacher at Columbia, our answer to Sputnik, a Van Doren Van Doren—as he once seemed the most admirable of Americans, so after the scandals he seemed far and away the most culpable. Yet Charlie was not alone in accepting help on these shows. According to Joseph Stone, Albert Freedman "could not recall any prospective contestant who flatly turned down assistance. . . ." Howard Felsher, who produced the show *Tic Tac Dough*, claimed that "not one of the people to whom he proposed assistance turned him down," either. Richard Goodwin, in his investigations, found only one man, a Greenwich Village poet, who refused to go along with the fixers, but in his book Goodwin cannot recall his name—another honest man lost to history.

Yet the crushing opprobrium came down not only hardest but, it seemed, almost exclusively on Charlie. He, the argument ran, should have known better. He, given his natural advantages in life, was least in need of the superficial celebrity that winning on a quiz show had to offer. He was, moreover, a teacher, whose life was bound by the ethic of intellectual honesty.

WHY did he do it? According to most accounts, including *Quiz Show*, Charlie was seduced into cooperation by the producers. In the movie he is portrayed as initially gullible, half-convinced that his winning is somehow good for education and hence for the country. Then—in for a penny, in for a pounding—he discovers he is in well over his head and unable to get gracefully out.

The movie takes it a step further. In a notable scene between the Charlie and the Goodwin characters, the latter suggests that Charlie would actually *like* to get caught, so that he could finally be free of all the pressures of deception. In this interpretation, Charlie was looking for full excoriation, leading to expurgation, ending in expiation.

Then there are those with a light taste for Freudian psychology, who favor the view that the tremendous publicity that came with his appearance on *Twenty-One* was the only way Charlie could surpass his father in fame. Deeper Freudians might argue the need for scandal as the only way he could bring his father down. (In a notable, passionate exchange between father and son in *Quiz Show*, Mark Van Doren says to Charlie, "Your name is mine," implying, besmirch yourself and you besmirch me.)

But was Charlie really an attractive *naif*, perfect for casting purposes but finally himself no more than a brainy rube? Or, once taken in, did he, deep down, want to be caught? I doubt it. I think Charlie—as he told *Life*, he was always a gambler—bet all, risked all, and finally lost all.

I do think Charlie wanted off the hook. The mad publicity, combined with the fraudulence that made his fame possible to begin with, must have been troubling to him; beyond a certain point, he did not want the charade to continue. But neither did he want to lose what it had brought him. As Joseph Stone notes, after Charlie had made yet another denial of guilt to him: "I was convinced Van Doren was lying and was not about to risk the comfortable niche of celebrity he had achieved."

And so, up till the end, he attempted to tough it out. When the hint of scandal first hit the air with Herbert Stempel's accusations, Charlie told the press, "It's silly and distressing to think that people don't have more faith in quiz shows." He later affected a shocked disbelief at the charge that he himself could possibly be among the culprits. He told Richard Goodwin that Albert Freedman was lying to the district attorney in saying that *Twenty-One* was fixed, and that Freedman had reasons for smearing him. He claimed innocence on the *Today* show.

At another point, Charlie did acknowledge that he had been offered help, which would mean that he knew the fix was in, but asserted that he had decided to turn it down. Finally, in the telegram that resulted in his being called before the Harris Committee, he claimed through NBC that "at no time was he supplied any questions or answers with respect to his appearance on *Twenty-One*," nor was he ever "assisted in any form and he has no knowledge of any assistance having been given the other contestants."

Joseph Stone, who does not seem a vindictive man, believes that Charlie did not even come altogether clean in his famous congressional confession, which began:

> I have learned a lot in these three years, especially in the last three weeks. I've learned about life. I've learned about myself. I've learned a lot about good and evil. They are not always what they appear to be. I was involved, deeply involved, in a deception. The fact that I, too, was very much deceived cannot keep me from being the principal victim of that deception, because I was its principal symbol.

We shall probably never learn why Charlie went on the quiz show and then agreed to go along with the prepared script. Could Charlie himself, after 35 years to think about it, say with confidence? Even if he could, my guess is that he is not likely to. I think he can never tell because he was caught up in too many contradictions and lies. Coming completely clean might also catch up others in the scandal whom Charlie would not wish to hurt. Finally, there is the possibility that Charlie himself still does not have the answer.

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WHICH leaves us with the question of the deeper meaning of the quiz-show scandals. Not everyone, of course, agrees they have a deeper meaning: Terrence Rafferty in the *New Yorker* referred to *Quiz Show* as "a speedy, absorbing chronicle of a trivial show-business scandal of the 50's." But too many people were taken in for it be trivial.

The conventional reading is that the quiz-show scandals spelled the end of American innocence. Richard Goodwin takes up this line, claiming "we were more innocent then," and adding that "we had been mind-fucked on an enormous scale. And we didn't like it." Goodwin would not be happy to hear David Halberstam's reading of this same episode in his recent book, *The Fifties*; there, Halberstam suggests that Charlie's success in the new cool medium of television made way for the new television star of the early 60's, John Fitzgerald Kennedy—Richard Goodwin's next boss.

The temptation is to take the quiz-show scandals as yet another of those defining moments in American history. But I am not sure I can make out what they defined. If they meant the end of American innocence, then good riddance to such innocence. If they showed human corruption—on the part of the producers, advertisers, network executives, contestants—such corruption is hardly a new story. Big money breeds corruption, always has and always will. That, as they used to say, is life in the big city.

Which brings me back to where I began, with Charlie. *Quiz Show* ends, like a Dickens novel, though not so happily, by telling what happened to the characters in later life. From a "crawl," or scroll of printed matter, we learn that Herbert Stempel finished his degree in social work at CCNY and now works for the Department of Transportation of the City of New York. Albert Freedman works at *Penthouse* magazine. The producers Jack Barry and Dan Enright, seventeen years after the scandals, scored with another televison show, *The Joker's Wild*, which made them millionaires. In 1990, the three major American television networks had gross revenues of $6 billion. Richard Goodwin, after being a speechwriter for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, left the White House during the Vietnam war, retired from politics after the death of Robert Kennedy, and now lives in Concord, Massachusetts, where, the crawl fails to mention, like all former Kennedy men, he awaits the second coming.

And Charlie? Charlie, the crawl informs us, worked for Encyclopaedia Britannica and now lives as a writer in Cornwall, Connecticut. It would have been closer to the truth to say that, since 1956, when he first stepped into an isolation booth at that NBC studio, Charlie has continued living in an isolation booth—a portable one, to be sure, perhaps even a fairly plush one, but still lonely and terribly cut off. He has spent 38 years there. As punishments go, it may not be as cruel as solitary confinement in a maximum-security prison, but neither can it have been any bed of roses.

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Eurocentrism Revisited

Bernard Lewis

EUROPE, Asia, and Africa are the three continents into which, by ancient tradition, the world was divided. A clear and simple description is provided by the Roman writer Pliny in his *Natural History*:

> The whole circuit of the earth is divided into three parts, Europe, Asia, and Africa. The starting point is in the West, at the Straits of Gibraltar, where the Atlantic Ocean bursts in and spreads out into the inland sea. On the right as you enter from the ocean is Africa, and on the left Europe, with Asia between them; the boundaries are the river Don and the river Nile.

This description clearly comes from a society whose world was defined by the Mediterranean, its shores, and its hinterland. It derives, like most Roman science and philosophy, from Greek writings, many of which are still extant.* Indeed, all the ancient texts in which the three names of Europe, Asia, and Africa occur are, without exception, Latin or Greek—that is to say, European. In the by-now considerable body of writings that have come down to us from the ancient civilizations of Asia and Africa, there is not so far a single occurrence of these names.

Europe was what the Greeks—and later the Romans and others—called their own homeland. Asia and Africa were what they called the lands of their neighbors. Europe was itself, self-defined in the successive phases of *Hellenismos, Romanitas,* and Christianity. Asia and Africa were designations of the Other—geographically-expressed equivalents of such ethnic, cultural, and religious designations as "barbarian" and "Gentile." (The barbarians did not of course call themselves barbarians, nor did the Gentiles call themselves Gentiles, until they were converted to Christianity and taught to see themselves as such.)

In this, European, perspective, Asia simply meant not-Europe East, while Africa or Libya meant not-Europe South. Some ancient philosophers, among them Aristotle, went a step farther, and equated Europe with freedom, independence, and the rule of law, and its neighbors with arbitrary tyranny and slavish submission. This view is still sometimes expressed in the councils of the European Union.

Needless to say, the inhabitants of Asia and Africa did not share this perception, and as far as the evidence goes, they were as unaware of being Asians and Africans as the inhabitants of pre-Columbian America were unaware of being Americans. They first became aware of this classification when it was brought to them—and at some times and in some places imposed on them—by Europeans.

It is therefore not surprising that while Europe, despite its many nations and languages, is today a single coherent entity—a genuine community of culture, values, religion, institutions, science, arts, even music—and is, or was until recently, inhabited by people of a single race, Africa and still more Asia show an immense diversity. The differences between Sicilians and Swedes, between Poles and Portuguese may loom large in Europe, but they are insignificant compared with the differences between India and Japan, between Iran and China, between Egypt and Zimbabwe.

Europe became Europe. Europe discovered and in a sense created America, since every polity in the western hemisphere, from the Arctic to the Antarctic, was founded on a European model and expresses itself in a European language. But Europe neither created nor discovered Asia and Africa. It invented them, and it is a supreme irony of our own time that in a wave of revolt against Eurocentrism, so many non-Europeans have adopted this ultimately Eurocentric view of the world, and defined themselves by the identity which Europeans imposed on them.

HISTORICALLY, culturally, even racially, there was no real barrier or dividing-line between Europe and its eastern and southern neighbors. Indeed, those parts of Asia and Africa which the Greeks and Romans knew and named had far more in common with Europe than with the remoter regions of the two

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* In these, the southern continent is called Libya, not Africa; the other two names are the same.

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continents. The Mediterranean was always far less of a barrier than the Sahara or than the mountains and steppes that mark the northern and eastern limits of Iran.

Compared with the great religions of India and China, Islam and Christianity are twin offspring of the same progenitors. Compared with the races of southern and eastern Asia and of central and southern Africa, the peoples of all the shores of the Mediterranean clearly share a common heritage. There is in fact no clear racial dividing line between white and nonwhite at any of the extremities of Europe—rather a series of gradations, as for example, from north to south, from blond to brunet to dark to swarthy to brown to black.

For the Greeks, Asia originally meant the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea, of which the western shore was Europe. Then, as a vaster, remoter Asia loomed on their horizon, it was renamed Microasia, Asia Minor, to distinguish it from the more distant realms of the Persians, the Indians, and the Chinese. In much the same way, the familiar East, which gave us the Eastern Question, became the Near and then the Middle East when the problems of a Far East attracted Western attention.

Under Roman and then Byzantine rule, Asia was the name of a province. It remained in use until the Islamic conquest, after which it disappeared from local usage. Neither the Arabs who conquered Syria nor the Turks who conquered Asia Minor retained the use of this name.

As for Africa, it was, for the Romans, the name of the Mediterranean shore that faced them in the South: home of Carthage, the one enemy power that seriously threatened the might and for a while even the survival of Rome. Scipio, the Roman who was most acutely and vocally aware of this danger, was known as Africanus, the African, not because he came from Africa, but because he conquered it. In the Roman empire, Africa became an imperial province corresponding roughly with present-day Tunisia plus parts of eastern Algeria and western Libya.

Unlike Asia, the name Africa survived the Arab conquest of the 7th and 8th centuries, and was retained by the new masters as a geographical and, for a while, administrative expression to designate the same area. It did not include Egypt or Morocco, still less the countries to the south, which were known in Arabic as Bilad al-Sudan, the lands of the blacks.

How then did the Muslims divide the world? They did so in two ways, one geographical, the other at once religious and political. In the geographical literature in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and other Muslim languages, the world is divided into "climates," in Arabic *iqlim*. The classical Muslim authors did not commit our modern error of ascribing racial or cultural or even historical attributes to these divisions. Their "climates" are purely geographical.

For Muslims, the important and operative division of the world was between the lands where Islam prevailed and those which had not yet been brought into the fold. In their advance in the Asian and African continents, the Muslims encountered no major military power and no serious religious rival. In Europe, they met both, and it is therefore not surprising that the theory as well as the practice of the *jihad*, the holy war for Islam, should have been mainly concerned with the struggle against Christendom in its various European theaters.

There is a curious parallelism in the mutual perceptions of the two. Each saw the other as a major rival, yet was unwilling to admit this. Christians, rather than speak of their enemies as Muslims, preferred to use ethnic terms and referred to them in different parts of Europe as Moors or Saracens, Turks or Tatars. In the same way, when Muslims spoke of the inhabitants of Europe, or even of the Crusaders who had come from Europe, they named them as Greeks or Romans or Franks or Slavs. When some religious designation was required, both used the same term, *infidel*. By this, both Christians and Muslims meant the same thing, differing only in its application.

EUROPE and its sisters Asia and Africa reappear in European writings at the time of the Renaissance and the consequent revival of Greek learning. Rediscovered ancient classical texts gave Europeans a new way of looking not only at the past, but also at the major events of their own time. Once again, as in antiquity, Greece was being invaded by the vast armies of a great king (the Ottoman Sultan) in the East. In the fresh perspective of the new learning, this was no longer seen primarily as a continuation of the old struggle between Islam and Christendom, but as a renewal of a more ancient struggle—the defense of free European Hellas against an Asiatic tyrant and his barbaric hordes.

This equation, however inappropriate, continued to affect European perceptions of events in the eastern Mediterranean for a long time to come. There was no comparable threat from Africa, but here too the old name was given new meanings derived from ancient texts and recent explorations.

But it was above all the discovery of America, as part of the European discovery of the world, that ensured the triumph of Europe over its rivals, and especially Islam, and the consequent universal acceptance of European notions and categories.

After some initial curiosity, Muslim interest in what Muslims called the "New World"—the name "America" rarely occurs—was minimal. The most remarkable document was a map prepared in

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1513 by the great Turkish navigator and cartographer Piri Reis, including information drawn from Columbus's own lost map and apparently supplied by a Spanish slave in the Turkish service. In 1517, Piri Reis presented the map in Cairo to Sultan Selim I, the conqueror of Egypt. It was deposited in the Topkapi palace and forgotten until it was noticed by a German scholar in 1929.

The earliest, and for a long time the only, Muslim work on America was the *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi*, a Turkish account of the West Indies, written in the mid-16th century and printed in 1729 at the first Ottoman Turkish printing press. In this work, the unnamed author speaks in some detail of the discovery and conquest of the New World, describes its flora, fauna, and inhabitants, and—naturally—expresses the hope that this well-favored land would in due course be illuminated by the rites of Islam and added to the Ottoman realms.

Arabic and Turkish writings in the 17th and 18th centuries show some slight awareness of the American colonies of their European neighbors, and a late 18th-century Turkish book on the women of the world even includes a fanciful description in verse of the (native) American woman, with a picture. A Chaldean (Uniate) Christian priest from Mosul traveled in Spanish America between 1675 and 1683 and wrote an account, in Arabic, of his travels.

I DO NOT know at what stage or by what processes the descendants of the Aztecs and the Incas came to understand and accept their identity as Americans. In Asia and Africa, however, the parallel processes can be dated with fair precision. They began with the advent of European domination, or at least influence, when Asians and Africans studied the hitherto despised languages of the Western infidels and barbarians, and began to learn geography from European textbooks.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Turks—for hundreds of years the front line of Islam against Christendom—still spoke of the countries beyond their western frontier as the lands of the Franks, of the Christians, or of the infidels, but not as Europe. But during the first half of the 19th century, the continental classification and the nomenclature that went with it gradually entered into local usage. The name Europe, in the form "*Arufa*," had made a fleeting appearance in early Arabic geographical works based on Greek originals and had quickly disappeared and been forgotten. In the 19th century it reappeared, and Arabic "*Urubba*," Turkish "*Avrupa*," Persian "*Urupa*" passed into common use. In countries under direct European rule, like Russian Central Asia, French North Africa, British India, the Dutch East Indies, and most of Africa, the impact of European geographical knowledge and instruction was more direct and more immediate.

The adoption of this European scheme of things naturally entailed the recognition of Asia and Africa as continents, though it did not, for some time at least, involve their acceptance as identities comparable with that of Europe. The notion of Asianism did not emerge until late in the 19th century, and it developed in the 20th, principally as an anti-Western movement, sometimes to promote anti-imperialism, sometimes a rival Asian imperialism. Apparently by mutual consent, the term Asian in this political context did not include the Muslim peoples of the southwest. It still does not include them in current American usage.

In Africa, the notion of a common African identity embracing the different religions, languages, cultures, and races of the continent from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope was a much later development and did not really become significant until after the ending of European rule. If Africanism survives, this form of revolt against a Eurocentric universe will mark a final triumph of Eurocentrism in Africa.

THE oceanic voyages of the European explorers around Africa to Asia, across the Atlantic to the Americas, created, for the first time in history, a new unity among all the continents, bringing all of them into contact with one another and preparing the way for a global interchange of foodstuffs and commodities, plants and domestic animals, knowledge and ideas.

There was also a negative side. These new intercontinental lines of communication made possible an interchange of diseases between the eastern and western hemispheres, sometimes leading to the emergence of virulent new strains, calling for new diagnoses and remedies. These could be social as well as medical, such as, for example, the new strain of slavery added to the numerous and widespread slave institutions of both the Old and the New Worlds.

Although it was known in medieval Europe, slavery was of minor importance there, far less significant in the social and economic life of Europe than it was in pre-Columbian America or in Muslim and non-Muslim Africa. The meeting of all these different cultures gave rise to a new variant—that known as colonial slavery. The inventiveness and cupidity of Europe, learning from and drawing on the plantation systems and the slave trade of Africa and the Islamic world, developed this variant. Colonial slavery and the seaborne slave trade became major factors in the crisscrossing interchanges among the four shores of the Atlantic—Western Europe, Western Africa, North America, South America.

But it was Europe and its daughters, too, that

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first decided to set the slaves free—at home, then in the colonies, finally in all the world. Western technology made slavery unnecessary; Western ideas made it intolerable. There have been many slaveries; there was only one abolition, which eventually shattered even the rooted and ramified slave systems of the Old World.

In all this, as in much else, the discovery of America, for better or for worse, was a turning point in human history, and an essential part of the transition to a modernity that began in Europe and was carried all over the world by European discoverers, conquerors, missionaries, colonists, and, let us not forget, refugees. Far more than the final Christian reconquest of Muslim Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella, the contemporary discovery of America ensured, in the long run, the triumph of Europe over its enemies.

The mines of the New World gave European Christendom gold and silver to finance its trade, its wars, and its inventions. The fields and plantations of the Americas gave it new resources and commodities, and enabled Europeans, for the first time, to trade with the Muslims and others as equals, and, ultimately, as superiors. And the very encounter with strange lands and peoples, unknown to history and scripture alike, contributed mightily to the breaking of intellectual molds, and the freeing of the human mind and spirit.

WHY then did the peoples of Europe embark on this vast expansion and, by conquest, conversion, and colonization, attempt to create a Eurocentric world? Was it, as some believe, because of some deep-seated, perhaps hereditary vice—some profound moral flaw?

The question is unanswerable because it is wrongly posed. In setting out to conquer, subjugate, and despoil other peoples, the Europeans were merely following the example set them by their neighbors and predecessors, and indeed conforming to the common practice of mankind. In particular, their attack on the neighboring lands of Islam in Africa and Asia was a clear case of be-done-by-as-you-did. The interesting questions are not why they tried, but why they succeeded—and then why, having succeeded, they repented of their success as of a sin. The success was unique in modern times; the repentance, in all of recorded history.

The attempt was due to their common humanity; their success to some special qualities inherent in the civilization of Europe and its daughters and deficient or lacking in others. No doubt the Europeans had the mixture of appetite, ferocity, smugness, and sense of mission which are essential to the imperial mood, and which they shared with their various imperial predecessors. But they also had something else, which today both the former conquerors, and those whom they conquered and then relinquished, might find it useful to examine.

It has now become customary to designate the larger civilization of which Europe is the source and America the leader as "the West." In addition to its obvious geographical denotation, this word originally had two overlapping but somewhat different meanings. In its first meaning, the word denoted a military alliance against the Soviet Union, an alliance that included some countries sharing few or none of the basic values of the West and linked to it only by strategic necessity; in its second, the word denoted a comity of like-minded nations sharing certain basic values concerning freedom and decency and human rights, and including neutrals who wished no part of the anti-Soviet alliance.

Today, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, a new, larger, and perhaps even greater Europe may emerge. The West, no longer hemmed in by military needs and constraints, may also aspire to yet greater achievements. But for the moment, among the Europeans and among their children and disciples, especially in North America, the mood of greed and self-confidence has given way to one of satiety, guilt, and doubt.

Doubt is good and, indeed, is one of the mainsprings of Western civilization. It undermines the certitudes that in other civilizations and in earlier stages of our own have fettered thought, weakened or ended tolerance, and prevented the emergence of that cooperation of opponents that we call democracy. It leads to questioning and thus to discoveries, and to new achievements and new knowledge, including the knowledge of other civilizations.

On the other hand, guilt in the modern sense—not a legal decision, but a mental condition—is corrosive and destructive, and is an extreme form of that arrogant self-indulgence that is the deepest and most characteristic flaw of our Western civilization. To claim responsibility for all the ills of the world is a new version of the "white man's burden," no less flattering to ourselves, no less condescending to others, than that of our imperial predecessors, who with equal vanity and absurdity claimed to be the source of all that was good.

A WORD that is much heard nowadays is "multiculturalism." Indeed, all cultures have their achievements—their art and music, philosophy and science, literature and styles of life, and other contributions to the advancement of humankind—and there can be no doubt that knowledge of these would benefit us and enrich our lives. The recognition of this infinite human variety, and of the need to study and learn from it, is indeed one of the West's most creative

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innovations. For it is only the West that has developed this curiosity about other cultures, this willingness to learn their languages and study their ways, to appreciate and to respect their achievements.

The other great civilizations known to history have all, without exception, seen themselves as self-sufficient, and regarded the outsider, and even the subculture or low-status insider, with contempt, as barbarians, Gentiles, untouchables, unbelievers, foreign devils, and other more intimate, less formal terms of opprobrium. Only under the pressure of conquest and domination did they make the effort to learn the languages of other civilizations and, in self-defense, try to understand the ideas and the ways of the current rulers of their world. They would learn, in other words, from those whom they were constrained to recognize as their masters, in either sense or both, as rulers or as teachers. By contrast, the special combination of unconstrained curiosity concerning the Other, and unforced respect for his otherness, remains a distinctive feature of Western and Westernized cultures, and is still regarded with bafflement and anger by those who neither share nor understand it.

We of the West have often failed catastrophically in respect for those who differ from us, as our dismal record of wars and persecutions may attest. But such respect is something for which we have striven as an ideal, and in which we have achieved some success, both in practicing it ourselves and in imparting it to others. It is surely significant that in the late 1970's and 1980's refugees fleeing from Vietnam made for the crowded island of Hong Kong—the one spot in all East Asia where a Western government still ruled, and where they could therefore count on the certainty of public scrutiny and concern, and the consequent hope, however slight, of help.

Imperialism, *sexism*, and *racism* are words of Western coinage—not because the West invented these evils, which are, alas, universal, but because the West recognized and named and condemned them as evils and struggled mightily, and not entirely in vain, to weaken their hold and to help their victims. If, to borrow a phrase, Western culture does indeed "go," imperialism, sexism, and racism will not go with it. More likely casualties will be the freedom to denounce them and the effort to end them.

It may be that Western culture will indeed go: the lack of conviction of many of those who should be its defenders, the passionate intensity of its accusers, may well join to complete its destruction. But if it does go, the men and women of all the continents will thereby be impoverished and endangered.

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Buddies

A Story

Felicia Ackerman

"NO, I DIDN'T say a friend of mine has AIDS." Mona looked up from the climatic-data summary. "At least not a friend I've already got. The AIDS buddy program matches you up with someone who has it, and you become that person's friend and helper." She gazed past Reid and out the window at a pair of reservations agents walking toward the airport's main terminal, collapsible umbrellas dangling from their wrists. One word from me and the whole city takes an umbrella, she thought happily. And nobody was going to regret it. Thick clouds were moving in as if they were using her forecast as a road map.

"They think friendship can be dispensed on a need basis? Like food and clothing?" Reid was saying, and Mona admitted she had been tempted to ask that kind of thing herself, but she'd doubted it would go over well at the training sessions. "Anyway," she added, "I know the answer. First of all, people who need AIDS buddies have nowhere else to turn, and second of all, yes."

"Training sessions? They train you to be somebody's friend?" Reid's face, florid, finicky, and fortyish, was scrunched up over two upper-air maps as if they held the secret of the universe, which of course they did, but only for those in the know. The ace of hearts, Mona had secretly dubbed him. Not only was his face reddish and vaguely heart-shaped, but she figured everyone deserved a chance to be the ace of something, and it was as clear as the air behind a cold front that Reid was not the ace of forecasting. He knew he wasn't. He didn't mind. Or maybe he did—she was never sure how to take some of his remarks.

"They sure do train you. Four sessions. It's half about how to help your buddy in practical ways and half how to really, really relate to him." Mona pushed her glasses up the bridge of her nose. The glasses had bright blue rectangular frames, which were supposed to make her face look less pale and circular. Sometimes she suspected they had the opposite effect, but it hardly mattered. What mattered was that she was no longer fat, that she had left the Boston forecast office and come to Cleveland, where no one knew about her 200-pound past. "We had to start off the first session by giving our impressions of everyone else there," she went on. "When I said I didn't know the others well enough to have impressions yet, the trainer told me not to be afraid to open up and say what I really felt. I wanted to say I felt they all liked the word 'caring' a lot. That's what they all called one another, 'caring.' "

Reid laughed loudly, startling her; his fastidious intensity seldom left room for enthusiasm about anything but the weather. He was twirling his prep-school ring on his fingertip, a continuing reminder that he was the only person in the National Weather Service who had gone to Groton.

"The trainer also told us, 'Never forget that your buddy is facing a major life crisis but still has the same hopes and dreams you have.' Just imagine, the same hopes and dreams I have! My buddy is going to want to be the best forecaster in America!" Mona said, and Reid asked, "So if you think the program is so silly, why are you in it?"

I'd sooner swallow a live salamander than tell you, she thought. "Why don't you do it, too?" she said. "Broaden your horizons. The program's very big on horizon-broadening. Or do conservatives feel that those who get AIDS deserve it?"

"Let's just say I doubt they would be my sort of people. And vice versa." He gave a stiff little laugh and walked over to the window. "I don't believe in picking my buddies on the basis of what disease they have. It's like Gresham's Law," and the rain began with a thunderclap, making Mona shiver a bit with excitement and fulfillment.

"Gresham's Law?" she said.

Reid had opened the window and was extending his hands into the first rainfall in nine days. "Gresham's Law is that bad money drives out good. Just as fake affection drives out real."

"Well. . . ." Mona couldn't help wondering what Reid knew about affection. Probably the buddy trainer would say anyone with Reid's negative attitude toward gays must subconsciously fear being gay himself, or at least be insecure about his own sexuality, but she supposed that, by the same token, you could say the trainer must subconsciously fear being conservative, or at least be insecure about his own political views. Still, in Mona's eleven months of working with him, Reid

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had said nothing even suggesting he might have a love life. Could he actually have some secret? Or was the secret that there was no secret, that he didn't have a love life, didn't want one, maybe wasn't even interested in sex? Surely *that* was the big taboo nowadays.

"So why are you in that program?" he asked again.

Because what you call fake affection doesn't sound so bad to me, now that I've learned that even a trim forty-two-year-old woman isn't much of a contender in the world of romance, Mona answered silently. I'll even get to do some good, and if that's not my only motive, so much the better for my buddy, because it makes the whole thing less unequal.

"Well," she said aloud, walking over to the window, "it's worth doing. And as an extra little inducement, the woman who got me into it told me being an AIDS buddy would change my life."

Reid smiled. His lips were thin and scarcely redder than his face. "Did she mention if the change would be for the better?"

"OH, THIS is much better than regular tea." Mona took another sip of the herbal tea Henry Dural had prepared. It tasted so much like grass that she wondered whether some could have gotten mixed in by mistake, but she was afraid if she showed reluctance to drink it, he might think she was worried about catching AIDS from him, although he didn't seem the sensitive type. He was a tall, blond, bony man with a manner so calm and mild it was making her pleasantly drowsy. But he didn't seem drowsy. He barely seemed ill. He barely felt ill, he had told her, only a trifle weak since he'd recovered from last month's bout with pneumonia.

Mona forced down a third sip, then tried to turn her head just enough to catch a glance through Henry's living-room window without making him suspect he was sharing her attention with the sky. Yesterday she had put herself on the line with her guarantee of no rain today; so the clouds had better hold off until midnight, nine hours to go. She fixed her eyes back on Henry and reviewed what she had been told about him: age (forty), occupation (registrar at Cuyahoga Community College), hobbies (murder mysteries, which she liked, and bridge, which she didn't).

She had also been told that Henry had had full-blown AIDS for three months.

"How did you get into weather forecasting?" he was asking, and Mona put her cup down and replied that it was almost by accident. "I mean, I had to take a science course in college, and I picked meteorology because I figured the labs wouldn't have anything slimy or smelly. And then, well, forecasting the weather turned out to be what I'm good at. My own special talent." She heard her voice thicken and swallowed hard. All through her first year and a half at Michigan, she'd been just the dormitory fat girl, and then she was the oracle everyone counted on to say, more reliably than the people on TV, whether a picnic or softball game would get rained out.

Henry smiled and asked if she had managed to stay interested in meteorology—choosing a profession because you were good at it sounded like choosing a lover because he was devoted to you, nice for the ego, but after a while, you'd get bored and want more of a challenge.

This is definitely one person with AIDS who doesn't have the same hopes and dreams I have, Mona thought. Henry was still smiling, but his face seemed to be changing, like a reversible picture she had seen of an old woman who turned into a young woman if you stared at her long enough. Now Henry's sharp cheekbones and light blue eyes made his face the face of a man who could afford to spurn devotion, who could pick and choose. Who wouldn't have given the gay male equivalent of fat Mona a second glance, who probably would have dismissed even the slim one as hopelessly unsexy. Who had probably had plenty of lovers. And one of them had given him AIDS. But she wasn't supposed to think about that. "Gay sex does not cause AIDS. A virus does," the buddy trainer had said, a half-hour before sobbing during the "sharing of losses" exercise that his greatest loss had been the death of his father, who had "smoked himself into the grave."

"I never get bored forecasting." Mona wondered what to say next. "How have you been doing? Are you afraid?" she said finally, feeling excited but also slightly preposterous. After all, she had just met this man today. What was she doing trying to walk into his innermost soul and make herself at home without a by-your-leave? But wasn't that part of the program?

"Of course," said Henry.

"What are you particularly afraid of?" Mona asked, forcing back the idea that she had no business asking such a question of someone she wouldn't dream of telling she'd had all of four dates in the past ten years.

"If you know what happens with AIDS, then you know what I'm afraid of," Henry said flatly. "I'm also afraid of facing it alone, now that so many of my friends are dead."

His hands were at his sides, looking oddly exposed and inert. Mona supposed she ought to take his nearest hand in hers, but now it was she who was afraid—not of catching AIDS, but of making a fool of herself. She leaned over and grasped his hand.

"You won't be alone," she said. "I'll be here."

"Thank you," Henry said, and the two sides of Mona pushed up against each other like the warm and cold sides of a stationary front. The cold side said, You'd each be doing this with anyone the program sent you, so how could it mean anything? He doesn't seem like your sort of person, anyway. Don't be a selfish jerk, said the warm side, he doesn't have to be your type, and besides, everyone is everyone's sort of person, that's the

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whole point, remember? Everyone has a vulnerable core where he's lonely and scared, so you can get close to anyone on that basis, if he lets you. And the cold side said, Oh, come on. But Mona ignored it and continued holding Henry's hand.

IT *is* changing my life, Mona found herself thinking during the next month, although she never would have admitted this to Reid, let alone to Henry. It sounded too much like an article she'd come across that called the AIDS crisis a great opportunity, without specifying for whom, people who had AIDS or people who didn't.

"That's how those types talk," Henry said, when she told him about the article. Just last week, he added, he had gone to an AIDS support group where someone said confronting your own mortality taught you to value life so much you no longer feared death.

Mona was walking toward Henry's bed, her eyes focused on the bowl of fish chowder she was balancing on a tray. She peered up. Lying in bed, propped up against two pillows, Henry in the afternoon's overcast light seemed nearly as white as the soup. It struck her that valuing your life so much you no longer feared death made about as much sense as valuing your job so much you wouldn't mind getting fired. But she said only, "Do you believe that?"

"It's like most things. It works best if you don't look at it too closely," he said, making Mona wonder whether he was counting her as one of those things. But she wasn't really worried. Over the past few weeks she'd decided her initial impressions had been right: Henry wasn't her sort of person, and it didn't matter. She handed him the tray, sat down in the chair beside his bed, gazed at the framed Mapplethorpe print above the headboard—it was a tame one, just a calla lily—and was almost ashamed of how much she hoped he would want a long visit today.

"Do you like Mapplethorpe?" Henry asked.

Mona took a quick look out the window. Then she admitted she had never seen Mapplethorpe's work until she decided to become an AIDS buddy, when she had bought a book of his photographs in roughly the same spirit she had gotten a guidebook before her vacation in Scotland last summer. "I made myself look at it a little longer every day, like getting desensitized for an allergy, till a picture of a man with a bullwhip up his posterior looked nearly as ordinary to me as a flower, and I felt so sophisticated and ready for anything. Then I get here and what do I find? Just a flower. . . . What's so funny?"

"I put the erotic ones away before your first visit. I didn't want to risk shocking you," he said, grinning.

They stared at each other and soon were both laughing. "Risk it," Mona said.

Henry hesitated. Then he began talking about how the 60's really were the perfect moment to be young and gay, when sex was in the air everywhere. Sex in the air everywhere, try putting that in your forecast, it's even better than raining cats and dogs, Mona said to herself, imagining pairs of writhing bodies falling from the sky. She was glad to be hearing about Henry's past. It made her feel worldly and daring, not at all the type to fear the hidden Mapplethorpe prints, although, as Henry went on with increasing animation, she was grateful to him for not testing her by making his recollections very graphic. He sounded nostalgic rather than boastful, almost like an old man reminiscing. But he had never wanted monogamy. Few gay men did in those days, he was saying, though there was Dan, who had left in a rage when Henry admitted he still had other lovers. Poor Dan, Mona couldn't help thinking. How terrible it must be to love someone who craved variety. What a heartbreaker Henry must have been. Even mortally ill, he was gracious and charming. She was hardly about to consider him dissolute, the way Reid would, but she had to push away the idea that he hadn't been a very reliable person.

Henry stopped talking and sank back against the pillows, his face suddenly slack and exhausted. Mona reminded herself not to be alarmed; he often dozed off after eating. She picked up the tray, put it on the night table, then stroked his hair with all possible gentleness. He smiled, his long-lashed eyelids fluttering. Mona felt as if something soft were expanding within her, like a flower in a time-lapse movie. She knew you were supposed to enjoy touching your buddy, but were you supposed to enjoy it so much? Who made the rules, anyway? Henry's eyelids closed, then snapped open as if jerked by a single cord.

"Please, let's talk more," he said. "I don't want to sleep. The more sleep you get, the more you need."

"Just like love?" Mona murmured, surprising herself as well as Henry, who gave her a quizzical glance. "I mean," she continued, "when you were talking about Dan, I couldn't help taking his side. It's so horrible to be . . . betrayed in love."

"Does that happen to you often?" Henry asked, and Mona felt a splash of ridiculous gratitude for his using the present tense, instead of assuming her love life was over, when actually it had never begun. But why not tell him her secret? Why not tell him right now? It was even in the instructions; hadn't the trainer said you shouldn't be afraid to open up emotionally to your buddy?

"I never had a chance," she said. "I used to weigh 200 pounds."

"What?" He sounded so bewildered she was about to repeat it, but then he was shaking his head, saying, "Amazing. Where did it go?"

"Oh, it goes into bakeries and ice cream parlors and candy stores, where it lies in wait for a chance to leap back on you."

"How long were you . . . large?" he asked, and

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she laughed and said when someone told you she'd weighed 200 pounds, you didn't have to be squeamish about the word "fat," and she'd been *fat* since childhood, over 180 pounds since age sixteen, in fact.

"Was your mother always after you about it? At least you never had to worry about coming out." Just last week Henry had said it had taken his parents years to accept his sexuality ("Mom, please accept my sexuality," had fluttered through Mona's head), but that they'd died in a car crash well before anyone ever heard the term "AIDS."

"My parents were professors," she said, "the old-fashioned sort who really lived the life of the mind. They scarcely noticed what I weighed. They only noticed my ideas. It was a nice way to grow up, but they expected me to become a scholar; so they're not too thrilled with what I've ended up doing." It occurred to her that she had this last in common with Reid, who had once mentioned he'd been mildly estranged from his parents ever since he made it clear he would never go back to New Hampshire and join the bank his great-grandfather had founded. Not that Mona's parents were the type for estrangement, they never went beyond gentle perplexity that any daughter of theirs could choose to spend her life forecasting the weather rather than studying Chaucer. "I guess I'm sort of coming out now, just to you. Would you believe you're the only person in Cleveland I've told about my past? No kidding!" she finished, feeling as giddy and elated as if she'd been up all night forecasting in a blizzard.

THERE were no blizzards in sight when she arrived at the weather station an hour later for the afternoon shift. There was only Reid, comparing two maps and humming Mendelssohn's "Spring Song," although it was October. He had a large repertoire of weather melodies, all from classical music, the only kind of music he liked or even approved of. Once he had told Mona he thought rock music appealed to people's cruder impulses, and she'd been tempted to reply, "Yes, it's good that way, isn't it?" Now she found herself speculating about him again. Could anyone really be as dried-up as Reid seemed? "Reid," she said, sitting down at a computer a few feet away from him, "what's your life like outside the weather station?"

"Excuse me?"

Mona giggled. So perhaps *this* was how being an AIDS buddy changed you, by filling you with so much fellow-feeling toward the people in your daily life that it periodically oozed all over them, whether they wanted it to or not. "Well, I've been working with you for a year, and I know almost nothing about you except that you're a . . ."

"Hopeless reactionary."

"Oh, I wouldn't put it that way," Mona said, although she had, to other people.

"I would," said Reid. "I am a hopeless reactionary. And my life outside the weather station is fine, thank you. I don't need the services of an AIDS buddy."

Mona swung around in her swivel chair, her face burning. A moment later Reid, who hardly seemed the type to go around touching people and certainly had never touched Mona before, was touching her on the shoulder, making her nearly jump out of her seat.

"Mona?" He was peering beyond her, out the window, as if watching for the rain to end. "I'm sorry. It's just, well, you know I don't care for this benevolent outreach. And my life outside the weather station *is* fine. I'm . . . involved with a wonderful person." His tone was conciliatory, but he was back at his maps before she could reply.

"Well," she said, "that's great," and it wasn't until she was midway through her forecast that it struck her what he had said.

Wonderful person, not wonderful woman. So maybe her speculations had been right. Maybe this was the closest he would ever get to letting her know, and come to think of it, what would it be like to be a gay conservative, a gay so conservative you kept your private life entirely private? Don't get carried away, maybe it didn't even cross his mind you could think "wonderful person" meant a man, she told herself. But she could hear his breathing and even his neck was red. She was filled with pity and certainty and wanted to say, Your secret is safe; I will never tell.

"DID you think it would stay the way it was?" Henry said, "a cross between *The Joy of Dying* and *Gidget Gets AIDS*?"

His voice was as mild as ever and his face scarcely more gaunt. But for the past ten days, an infection had kept him almost constantly in bed, which at least beat going to the hospital. "I don't want to go to the hospital," he was saying.

"You won't." Mona clasped his hand, which felt warm and strong, as if his closest connection to death were the murder mysteries she kept bringing. "You won't if I can help it."

"You and whose army?"

"Yours." She mentally reviewed the troops. There was a home-health aide who came every morning. There was Henry's doctor. There was also Gary, a good-natured shoe salesman who often dropped by after work. Gary was Henry's new AIDS buddy.

"Could you get the tape now?" Henry asked.

Mona nodded, although she knew he would be shut off from her while New Age music clogged the room. She hoped the music wouldn't make her doze off. She was so tired. Yesterday she had stayed past midnight, and afterward she'd been too worried to sleep. Anything could happen, it could go either way, the doctor had warned, and who were those fools who said the cure for unhappiness was to think about others instead of yourself? Did they think you couldn't be unhappy over what was befalling the others? She put the tape on, then sat down again as the music began

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and Henry closed his eyes. The tape was from Gary, making Mona recall her flare of panic when she learned Henry had acquired another AIDS buddy. "You mean you won't be needing me any more?" she had managed to get out, and Henry had replied that of course he still wanted her as a buddy, but why have one buddy when you could have two? Certain things he could discuss only with another gay man. I'm no longer squeamish, she had wanted to cry, didn't I put both your sexy Mapplethorpes back up and don't I face them every day without flinching? But she'd known it would be futile.

When the tape ended, Henry opened his eyes. "You probably think meditating is silly," he said.

Mona swallowed so hard it hurt. "I'm not so sure what's silly any more. Anyway, they told us in the training program we mustn't be judgmental. They said people with AIDS are entitled to do whatever brings them solace. Aside from joining the Moral Majority, I guess," she added, and was rewarded when Henry chuckled. She just hoped Gary couldn't come up with anything like that.

WHEN she got to the weather station later that day, instead of Reid there was a note. "At the radar site. Back around 8—RHL." She picked up a map, felt her energy revive, and for the next few hours thought about little but the weather.

"You must be Mona," said a voice.

Mona turned around. Facing her was a woman with glossy strawberry-blond curls, deep-turquoise eyes, and about 50 surplus pounds. No doubt she could have modeled for *Big Beautiful Woman*, the magazine a friend in Boston had shown Mona, as if the fact that some fat women were beautiful had any more bearing on her life than the fact that some fat women were opera singers.

"Yes, can I help you?" Mona said.

"Actually, I'm looking for Reid." The woman had a lively voice with a slight Southern accent. "I expected to find him right here, eyes glued to the maps, pouring his whole heart and soul into his forecast."

Mona started to laugh, then checked herself and said Reid would be back in about an hour. "Do you want me to tell him you—"

"Sure, I'm Elaine—no, I think I'll surprise him. I just flew in from California." She glanced at the wall clock, then back at Mona. "Maybe you could come and eat with me at that cafeteria in the main terminal? I feel as if I know you already, after all I've heard about you from Reid."

"What have you heard?" Mona couldn't resist asking.

"Come with me and I'll tell you."

"Reid's told me all about what a terrific forecaster you are," Elaine said once they were seated at a rather isolated table overlooking the runways. "He can't get over it. He calls you the queen of forecasting." She propped her chin on her fist and beamed at Mona.

Mona couldn't help beaming back. "How do you know Reid?" she asked.

"His great-aunt lived across the street from me. She was his favorite relative—a marvelous, elegant old lady like someone in a Victorian novel." Elaine launched into an appealing tale of the old lady's final years and her faithful grandnephew.

Mona looked out the window. Two days ago, she had predicted rain for today, but yesterday she'd reversed herself; so whatever happened, she was bound to be right. Not to mention wrong. And eventually Elaine, following Mona's gaze, was saying that when Reid was expecting rain, he liked to drive to the approaching front and meet it head-on. "Unless he's with me, and I'm really not in the mood. Thank heaven, he knows enough to put his girlfriend ahead of his forecasts," she ended in a rush.

"You're Reid's girlfriend?" Mona said.

"Yes, I know that sounds as if I don't have to worry about a date for the prom, but. . . ."

"But—"

"But he's never mentioned me." Elaine was still gazing outside, her face now delicately pink, like the inside of a seashell. "He's . . . being a gentleman."

"A gentleman?"

"Yes." Elaine closed her eyes. The lids were dusted with silvery powder. She was silent so long Mona started casting about for something to say. "You see, I'm married," Elaine almost whispered, opening her eyes but not looking at Mona.

Mona's fork stopped in mid-air. "*Reid's* involved with a married woman?"

"Yes, he's shocked, too. We both are. In fact, it was years before we even admitted we were in love with each other. I took the initiative, of course." Elaine took another sip of coffee, her upraised hand smooth and pretty, with pink polished nails. And her left hand, curled up on the table, had a golden topaz on the fourth finger; did this replace a wedding ring she wore in California? "This isn't how I set out to live," she was saying, "but I won't break up my home until both my children are grown. So we're waiting. Six years down, four to go. Not many men would wait anywhere near that long," she added, her expression brightening back up a little. "I suppose you think it's odd, my telling you this? There's no one else I can tell."

"Is he going to be surprised?"

"Reid? He thinks having an illicit relationship is even worse than I do. We don't tell anyone, can't you see? I wasn't planning to do this. But then—an AIDS buddy, a semi-official confidante, what could be safer? And now he won't have to worry about letting anything slip with you."

Mona tried to picture Reid letting anything slip and suppressed a giggle. "Are you a conservative, too?" she asked.

"God, no." Elaine laughed so richly and exuberantly that a man two tables away turned and smiled for a moment. "But it's fine with me that

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he is," she continued, lowering her voice again. "At least when a conservative loves you, he loves you more than he loves the oppressed masses. Anyway, if your husband teaches at Stanford and you live practically on campus, a conservative is a breath of fresh air. You know what Stanford people are like? They're so PC, they'd think my real sin is being in love with a Republican."

When they returned to the weather station, Reid was at a long table, his back to the door. He was humming "Fall" from "The Four Seasons." Elaine pressed her finger to her lips, then tiptoed over to him and put her hands over his eyes. "Surprise!" she said.

He spun around, his face glowing. "I had no idea."

Neither did I, Mona thought. I work so hard, I lose 80 pounds, and all I get is to be an AIDS buddy to someone who doesn't think I'm enough for him. And here's this woman who lets herself stay fat and isn't even faithful to her husband—why have one man when you can have two?—and she has someone who loves her so much, he. . . . Mona realized she was furious. "How's the marine outlook?" she asked.

A hint of Reid's intent forecasting expression crossed his face, but he handed Mona his worksheet and turned back to Elaine. This looks way off, Mona noted gleefully. And I'm the queen of forecasting! She sat down. Soon her heart was gliding seven miles above the earth, in the rushing winds of the jet stream.

The following month, Henry went into the hospital. You weren't supposed to get too emotionally involved, Mona reminded herself as she drove from the hospital to the weather station; the trainer had said that over and over, although you weren't supposed to be too uninvolved, either. You had to be just right, caring about your buddy as a person but not to the point of jealousy that he wanted to spend tomorrow with his other buddy, let alone deep depression because this person you cared about precisely the right amount was dying. Mona's eyes filled; she blinked and wiped them. She switched on the radio to an oldies station, and Brenda Lee's voice suffused the air. "I want to be wanted." Wrong attitude, of course, and wasn't that another wonderful thing about meteorology?—nobody cared about your attitude as long as your forecast was correct.

By the time she reached the weather station, she had decided that even AIDS buddies were entitled to whatever attitudes they damn well pleased, provided that they managed not to burden the patient with them. She walked over to the satellite display and another idea struck her: Henry wanted to be wanted. All his life he had been wanted. So why not give him the comfort of knowing that mortal illness hadn't dimmed his appeal, that he was going out in a blaze of romantic glory, an object of jealousy rather than charity, even to someone who was, by his standards, the wrong sex? Again her eyes began to fill and she wiped them, willing them to stop before Reid could notice.

Reid, however, had other things on his mind. He was engrossed in an oncoming cold front he and Mona had been arguing over for two days, and he barely looked up until the telephone rang. "National Weather . . . oh." His voice dropped nearly to a whisper, and he turned so she could not see his face. "Of course. I have tomorrow off. . . . Anything you want. You know that."

Anything you want, Mona repeated inwardly. She wanted to walk into this picture like Mary Poppins—well, not quite this picture; after all, she didn't want Reid. And now he was hanging up and telling her he'd be leaving a bit early; he was going to California.

Mona was surprised at his saying even this much; he hadn't mentioned Elaine since the visit. "Do you get to see each other often?" she asked.

"No." His voice was becoming more distant, as if he were already on his way.

"Did you ever think of, uh, getting a job out there?" It was like walking ahead of him along a narrow bridge. At any point he could push her off. But he replied quietly that Elaine thought it was better this way, without the constant temptation to spend too much time away from her family. "It's a hard situation for her," he added.

Hard for her! "Isn't it hard for you? Don't you . . . get jealous?"

Reid's lips tightened. "I just put up with it." He turned to the maps.

Well, Mona thought, I've learned it's not so hard to ask someone about jealousy. I just hope Henry's in a reminiscing mood on Friday—and it turned out that he was.

So it was easy, sitting at his bedside in the hospital room, to ask about Dan, who had wanted fidelity. Easy to ask if Henry hadn't found it just a bit thrilling to have someone be jealous and possessive about him. Easy, even, to keep her expression neutral when he said it hadn't been thrilling at all—he hated hurting people's feelings—and she saw that her jealousy would not be a gift. It would be a problem. It would have to stay hidden. She'd just have to put up with it.

"Could you bring more tapes next time?" Henry asked.

"Of course." The blood rushed to Mona's face. "Anything you want. You know that. Tomorrow?"

But then she recalled that over the weekend Gary would be here. Again. Doing what? Could they possibly. . . . She didn't let her mind finish the sentence. But all through the next two days, through the drive in the country, and the lunch with a neighbor, and the blind date that was such a poor match it struck her and the man both as funny, she kept giving herself little bulletins: 48 hours to go, 30 hours, 24, until it was Monday morning and she was at the weather station for the day shift. "Eight hours to go."

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"Excuse me?" Reid glanced up from the sounding chart.

"I was talking to myself."

He was twirling his Groton ring. But he wasn't all bad; he had been wrong about the cold front and he'd acknowledged this in his usual way, with the good grace she found almost touching. And he knew about jealousy. He just put up with it; six years down, four to go, Elaine had said. Of course, this could be partly the same mulishness he so often displayed once he'd taken a notion about a forecast, but maybe one man's mulishness was another man's dedication. At least he wasn't counting the cost. He wasn't joining support groups for men who loved too much. He still said, Anything you want. The way I did to Henry, Mona thought, gazing at Reid, who was gazing at the chart. Okay, you hopeless reactionary, she said silently, inspire me again.

A WEEK later to the day, Mona was at the weather station, beaming at a snow advisory. Henry was going home tomorrow. "We lucked out with the antibiotics this time," the doctor had said. Mona felt as if she had taken an antibiotic for the soul; she was planning a special dinner for Henry's homecoming, and she barely minded that Gary would be present. Soon I'll be so ferociously wholesome and mature I'll get bottled so they can sprinkle me at Girl Scout troop meetings, she thought, wrapping herself more tightly in the paisley shawl she had bought after hearing the news. She had gotten the shawl for herself and an enamel copper bowl for Henry. She even had something for Reid. "Get a load of this," she said, handing him a newspaper clipping. "Stanford woman student accuses professor of 'smoldering glances,' " said the headline.

Reid gave it only the briefest of glances himself, then stared outside at a sky so gray it seemed almost an act of faith to suppose anything blue above it.

"I guess Elaine wasn't kidding when she told me what Stanford people were like," Mona said. "She must be having a field day with this. Did she tell you about it?"

"No."

Mona waited, then concluded he wasn't going to say more. Probably he had decided that someone who trafficked in fake affection was unworthy of alluding to his sacred surreptitious adulterous love affair; well, the hell with him.

"You might as well know," Reid's voice was like freezing rain, "Elaine and I are no longer seeing each other."

FOR several weeks, Mona heard nothing about Elaine. But as the days grew colder and the snow season intensified—the season Mona loved because it meant that everyone, *everyone* had to take an interest in the weather—stray facts about Elaine began wafting through Reid's conversation like floaters drifting across a visual field. Elaine was practically the only person in Palo Alto who didn't jog, bike, or play tennis, the only woman who wasn't modeling herself on Jane Fonda. Elaine knew whole paragraphs of Jane Austen by heart. Elaine had a beautiful alto voice but no desire to sing professionally—Elaine thought her talents should be used to enrich her life, not to build a career. Did Mona realize that Elaine was nearly the only intelligent woman in America who still felt that way? "The others have all become lawyers," Reid said, laying out several maps.

All those past rebuffs, and he supposed Mona would be willing to listen now that he wanted to keep Elaine in his life by talking about her. Well, he was right. Thick snowflakes swirled outside; the sky was as white as the ground. All the color was right here inside the weather station: the green patches on the radar screen; Mona's paisley shawl; Reid's face, red as ever, but thinner and tighter than before the break-up. She opened the window, scooped some snow off the sill, rolled it into a ball, and threw the ball out into the twilight. "Did her husband ever find out about you?" she asked, turning around.

"Not that we knew of."

"But now she's going to stay with him for good and never see you again."

"I always knew it was a possibility." A muscle twitched under his left eye.

"Fake affection drives out real?"

"This is her family," Reid said evenly. "It's not like setting yourself up to be the soulmate of a stranger." He went back to the maps.

"But I thought you and she—"

"You thought everything had to be 50-50, the way they say in feminist support groups?" He didn't look up. "Well, I've got news for you, nothing's 50-50. Why should it be? Think about it."

"I did and it doesn't have to be."

He raised his eyes and stared at her. "Then you're practically the only person nowadays who realizes that."

Ten minutes later, he was again reminiscing about Elaine, Elaine at the lakeside, arms full of flowers, and not a trace of Palo Alto in anything she said. Eighteen years in California, and she remained impervious to its ideas and jargon; she was like the Bermuda high whose strength rebuffed tropical disturbances. He can't say anything nice about Elaine without saying something mean about everyone else, Mona thought. Then another thought struck her. True, Reid talked about Elaine rather than his feelings, and his reminiscences were nothing like Henry's. But there was no getting around it; he was using Mona as an AIDS buddy.

"WELL," Mona took a final sip of the lemonade she had prepared, "is there anything else I can do before I go to the weather station?"

"How about a story about your life?" Henry swung his feet up onto his coffee table.

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"How about a story about someone else's life?" Mona said. "This is a man who many years ago fell in love with a beautiful woman who lived far away. It wasn't just her beauty. He loved everything about her. But she was married and he was very upright; so he didn't say anything. Then one day she told him she loved him. But she wouldn't leave her husband until her two children were grown. For six years, the man lived for his telephone conversations and rare meetings with the woman, although their consciences plagued them. Then she decided she could no longer live a double life. He offered to wait and have no contact with her until the remaining four years were over. But she said it had to end right then, forever. So now he's living in his memories, living in the past like a widower, except that he's living in the future, too, hoping that in four years she'll change her mind and come back and get him."

"This is a real person?" Henry said.

"The man I work with. What do you think of him, Henry?"

"I think he sounds like a fool."

"I don't."

"Do you like him?"

"I'm afraid so," Mona said; she realized she meant "afraid" literally.

She tried to tell herself it was a trick of the imagination or that maybe she was turning into emotional flypaper—the sort of person who fell in love with anyone crossing his path. But it was like trying to reason your way out of a sunburn. Whatever she had felt and still felt for Henry no longer seemed romantic, any more than midnight-blue shoes looked black once you held them next to black ones. So Reid was wrong about Gresham's Law—Mona leaned back in her living room's softest chair—fake affection didn't drive out real. It opened you up so you became dangerously receptive to real, even if it wasn't directed at you. Or maybe that had nothing to do with it. Maybe any forecaster should have foreseen that a woman who valued, above all, constancy and devotion would be drawn to a man who had demonstrated these qualities, against all odds, for the past six years. And a man like Reid, what should he be expected to want? A traditional woman, of course, one who wasn't politically correct and perhaps who would also bring glamor and excitement into his life. But who could ever consider Mona glamorous or exciting? Well, she said to herself, he calls me the queen of forecasting. Maybe that's a start—oh, come on.

But she rose, walked into the bedroom, and rummaged through her top dresser drawer, her fingers trembling a little. In the first glow of her weight loss, she had experimented with cosmetics, enjoying the idea and feel of them, but in the end she'd decided the effect verged on the pathetic; it was so obvious how hard she was trying. She had not worn makeup in over a year. Now she put on blue eyeshadow, coral lipstick, and blusher. She wrapped her paisley shawl around her and secured it with the cameo brooch her parents had given her for her fortieth birthday. She took off her glasses and peered at her agreeably blurred reflection in the dresser mirror. "I am the queen of forecasting," she said, and began laughing at how absurd she was being and how much fun it was.

At the outset, Mona had resolved to wait six weeks before trying to settle on a first step. But when the six weeks were up, she had no idea what to do. Reid was talking about Elaine much less now, but Mona had no idea what it meant. Play it by ear, she decided. "I have something to tell you, Reid," she said almost as soon as she walked into the weather station. "You were right."

Reid was standing near the satellite display, but he wasn't studying the screen. He wasn't gazing out the window. Incredibly, he seemed to be waiting for her.

"I know," he said. "The front's already over Detroit." He looked excited and happy. Could you really feel that way about a forecast when your heart was broken? Well, maybe she would soon find out for herself, or maybe . . . Reid's heart was not so broken any more. Mona had a surge of confidence and vigor, all her energy focused as if she were forecasting in a tight situation.

"Oh, I didn't mean the front," she said, striding toward him until she stood barely a foot away. "I meant you were right about fake affection. Not that it drives out real, exactly. It's just nothing compared to real. I see that now, and I'm never going to be an AIDS buddy again."

"You mean you're going to stop visiting that man?"

"Oh, no," said Mona, with a large emphatic gesture that almost hit the screen. "I have a responsibility to him. Besides, I like him. I'm just never going to sign up for another buddy. It's stupid, thinking you can be someone's kindred spirit just because he's in trouble."

"I have something to tell you, too." Now Reid looked almost dizzy with happiness, and Mona had a flare of wild hope that lasted just long enough for her to notice it. "I couldn't bear to say anything until it was definite," Reid continued, "but Elaine got back in touch with me eight days ago. We've been talking. We've decided . . . she's decided . . . we're going to go back to the way things were. We'll talk on the telephone when we can, and see each other occasionally, and it's only four years now until we can get married." He laughed. "You know how everyone thinks he's part of an oppressed minority nowadays? Well, I think people who love someone they can't be with ought to unite and demand affirmative action to give them the person they love, because if you love someone you can't have, that makes you truly oppressed, you know?"

"Yes," said Mona. "I know."

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The Battle of the Books

THE WESTERN CANON: THE BOOKS AND SCHOOL OF THE AGES. By HAROLD BLOOM. *Harcourt Brace. 578 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL J. SILVER

As has been recorded in dispiriting detail by numerous observers, the wholesale embrace of multiculturalism in our universities has mainly led not to an opening-up of the curriculum to other cultures, but to a denigration of the products of our own Western tradition. Worse, the multiculturalists have been joined in spirit by two other academic movements: the gender-feminists, and the "new historicism." The gender-feminists aim to undo the Western "canon"—the commonly accepted great works—as the cultural traces of male privilege or "patriarchy" (to use the agitprop slogan). The new historicists reduce literary works to ideological manipulations; in this reading, the great books of the West amount to a sorry parade of racist, sexist, chauvinist, and hyperrationalist apologetics.

To be sure, there have been counteroffensives to these attacks on the Western cultural tradition, but most of them have been confined to arguing with the philosophical premises of the radicals, or to exposing the solecisms and irrationality hiding behind the scholarly veneer of multiculturalist "theory." Valuable as such fusillades have been, there has been a missing dimension, and that is why one approaches the latest work by the eminent literary critic Harold Bloom with high expectations.

Like some other commentators, Bloom expresses open contempt for the radicals, lumping them together under the droll rubric of the "School of Resentment." But though he gets off some choice polemical rounds—vigorous if not especially fresh or well-thought-out—the main purpose of *The Western Canon* is not to attack but to defend. What Bloom defends is the notion that "aesthetic merit" is, and should be, the only valid criterion for judging the worth of literature; by that criterion, an objective pecking order of greatness emerges, which Bloom contends it is necessary for us to respect.

The bulk of Bloom's book consists of discussions of 26 of the great literary figures of the West; among these *primi inter pares* are Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Dickens, Tolstoy, Proust, and Beckett. In appendices at the end, Bloom also offers the names of hundreds of other major figures as a guide to further reading.

With an exception here or there, few are likely to quarrel with Bloom's principal choices, but the lists at the end are more contentious. Dividing them according to a scheme borrowed from the 18th-century Italian philologist, Giambattista Vico, Bloom gives us four ages of Western literature: a Theocratic Age, an Aristocratic Age, a Democratic Age, and our current Chaotic Age. Unfortunately, as the time draws nearer to our own moment, Bloom's confidence in what constitutes canonical status appears to fade.

There seems to be something almost arbitrary in many of Bloom's choices of contemporary authors. We may note with relief the absence of Alice Walker—who comes in for some nasty invective in the main text as a representative of the "resentment" school—but why should the no less ideological Toni Morrison be accorded the laurel? And we may wonder at Bloom's showily idiosyncratic insistence that he felt obliged to include the distinguished poets Robert Lowell and Philip Larkin *only* because they are esteemed by other critics (but not by him), while without any special pleading he casually lists that universal "Catalonian" poet J.V. Foix. (Good luck in finding his poetic *oeuvre* in your local bookstore.) And then there are Bloom's cute acts of log-rolling, as when he canonizes his fellow academic superstar, Frank Kermode, for *The Sense of An Ending*—a worthy book but a work of criticism, not literature.

BUT there are larger problems with *The Western Canon*, and they have to do precisely with Bloom's notion of aesthetic merit, his criterion of canonical status. For him, the essence of aesthetic merit is "strangeness." Indeed, it is notable how often, in discussing great works, he repairs to what is especially peculiar, offbeat, or weird about them. In general Bloom's tastes run to the grotesque as much as to the sublime, and from that point of view alone, *The Western Canon* may be the least traditional defense of tradition ever penned.

What explains this obsession with strangeness? Bloom started his career as an ingenious interpreter of British Romantic poetry—William Blake, William Wordsworth, and Percy Bysshe Shelley being his special favorites. Where earlier critics had tended to see the Romantics as sentimental, nature-worshipping pietists, Bloom emphasized their Promethean side, turning them into visionary questers. And Bloom himself has always identified with this Romantic Prometheanism—the battle of man to overcome the limitations imposed by the gods. For him, there is no higher divinity than the exalted sublimity of our deepest self (or Self).

In the early 70's, Bloom started developing a theory of literary influence, in which he married this Promethean theme to Freud. According to the theory, first articulated in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973), writers become great through a symbolic slaying of their literary forebears; this attempted Oedipal vanquishing of the "father" is accomplished by swerving away from or deflecting the powerful metaphors and myths

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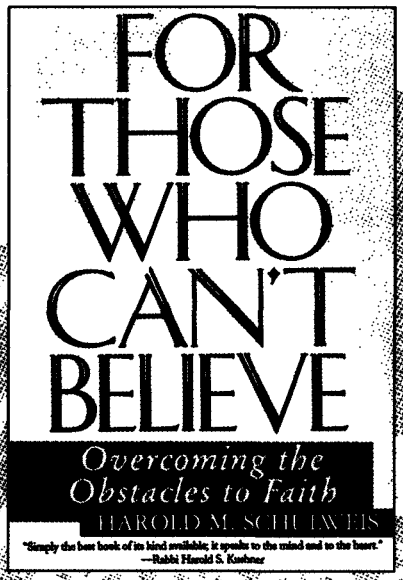
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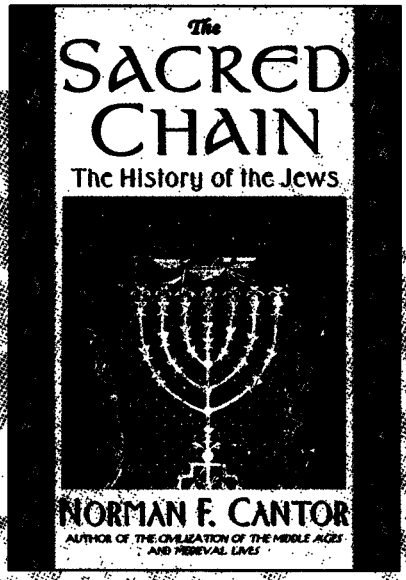
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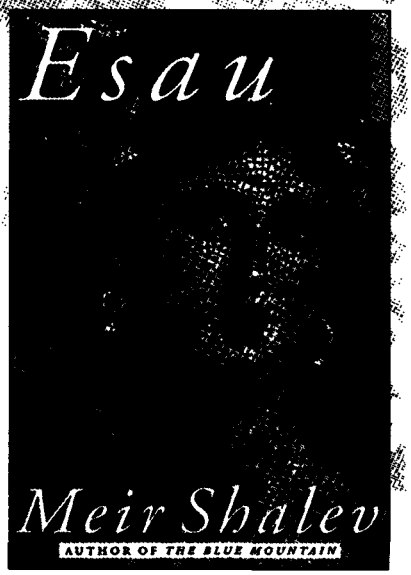

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of the great figures of the past. Put another way, the writer becomes great by throwing off the shackles of past invention and learning to find his true self.

By the late 70's, Bloom had turned to the Jewish mystical tradition of Kabbalah to find interpretive analogies for the methods used by aspiring poets to ward off the ghosts of literary ancestors. Soon he was exploring mystical traditions more widely, and came to embrace the shadow religion of gnosticism.

Scholars tell us that gnosticism, which coexisted with Judaism and Christianity in the early centuries of our era, is an esoteric tradition in which a secret knowledge of the divine—a "*gnosis*," from the ancient Greek term for knowing—is passed down from adept to adept. In Bloom's revisionist gnosticism, however, the spiritual circuit that should run from reflection on the secret things to worship of the divine as the source of those secret things is cut short. Why not, he seems to say, just stop with the reflecting Self? Bloom adopts gnostic trappings, in other words, not to proselytize for a renewed spirituality but to trumpet his antinomian trust in himself—his often-expressed pride in living and thinking outside the higher law.

So it is not surprising that Bloom tends to define the greatness of his canonical authors through their embodiment of a similarly extreme narcissism—which it sometimes requires all the hermeneutical brilliance of a Harold Bloom to bring to light. Doing so, indeed, means that other concerns go by the boards in *The Western Canon*. Thus, although Bloom pays extravagant lip service to the notion of the "aesthetic," one finds in this book virtually no mention of the *art* of writing, or anything more than passing regard for the special beauty of great poetry and prose. This is a shame, since one of the worst effects of the new political reductionism in literary studies has been to wither any appreciation for the sensuous wonders of great writing. Bloom, who warns against the puritanism and philistinism of the multiculturalists, thus inadvertently contributes to their de-aestheticizing view of literature.

Even as he dispenses with traditional notions of style as an important element of literary greatness, Bloom also dispenses with traditional notions of meaning. Not content to attack the radical Left's appropriation of literature for political aims, he also professes himself dismayed by the view—which he attributes, mystifyingly, to "the Right"—that great writing may have moral lessons to teach. For Bloom, literature, even when it is the exercise of supreme intelligence, has no cognitive content.

The center of Bloom's canon is Shakespeare—not, however, because of the transcendent beauty of Shakespeare's writing, and not because of Shakespeare's unrivaled ability to show us the human world in all its multifarious complexity, but rather because no one else has had Shakespeare's power to imitate life by teaching us "how to speak to ourselves." It is through the Shakespearean soliloquy, writes Bloom, that we learn how to "overhear" ourselves, and thus to reckon with our deepest selfhood. If this is the sum and substance of Shakespeare's genius, it is bad news for anyone who believes that great literature can teach us about the world, or about social experience, or about humane values.

Bloom's obsession with the self is even more strongly evident in his treatment of traditional religious themes. Take his reading of Dante, the greatest Christian poet of our literary tradition. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante created an immense narrative poem reflecting his own—and by extension any professing Christian's—journey to redemption through faith. It is a work of staggering originality and richness, combining political allegory (of the dynastic struggle of the Guelphs and Ghibellines for control of the Florentine city-state), spiritual autobiography, and doctrinal teachings; and it accomplishes this within an epic form which does nothing less than reinvent the Italian language as a vehicle for the "high style" of abstract thought and sublime sentiment, while retaining all its vernacular energy and worldliness.

And what of these things can be found in Bloom's account? Again, there is precious little reflection on the beauty and inventiveness of Dante's language—which can be felt even in translation. As to doctrine and religious sentiment, Bloom dismisses—with the kind of grudging admiration that barely conceals contempt—the many learned exegetes who have contributed to recovering the theological context of Dante's allegorical scheme. For Bloom, Dante may have been a religious poet, but he was first and foremost a poet, and great poets can have but one true faith: the faith in their own "sublime" poetic self.

Thus, where Bloom locates Dante's "true" greatness is in his invention of Beatrice, the quasi-angelic guide who leads Dante (as a character in his poem) to divine grace. Beatrice was a real historical person, a banker's daughter who died young and for whom Dante harbored an unrequited passion. To Harold Bloom, the fact that Dante in his poem elevates Beatrice to the status of spiritual mediator, much higher than that of the nominal angels and saints, suggests that Dante is, in effect, telling the world that *he* is like God, for he too possesses and embodies the miraculous power of creation.

Perhaps Bloom has captured here some psychological truth about Dante the man. (Anyone who has ever attended a literary cocktail party knows that even the most minor of poets can be a colossal egotist; how much more so, we can imagine, the truly great.) But in its own way Bloom's reading is amazingly reductive: Dante's life, his historical setting, his understanding of Church teachings, his poetics—above all, the transforming power of his artistic imagination—are all tossed aside in order to pay tribute to his alleged deification of himself.

As IT happens, there are writers whose work is well served by Bloom's gnostic bent. For instance, he is entertaining on the very strange second part of Goethe's *Faust*, which he amiably likens to a "monster movie"; perhaps his discussion of it will help this work,

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long confined to specialists, gain new readers. And Bloom has always had interesting things to say about the American Romantics, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Whitman's "barbaric yawp" about the "the real me" and "me myself," and Dickinson's angst-ridden wrestling with a highly personalized God, are engaging subjects for Bloom's gnostic treatment.

Yet in the end, Bloom's approach to literature, even when it "works," is a peculiarly airless and smothering one. Missing from it is any sense of literature as a living medium, involving multiple webs of influence, chains of interaction, all the stuff and matter of worldly life, and beautiful writing to boot. It is good to have so eminent a figure as Harold Bloom in the battle against the ideological philistines; but we need a more capacious and vital defense of our literary civilization than the one he affords us.

Tradition?

AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE: AN AMERICAN RABBI AND HIS CONGREGATION. BY PAUL WILKES. *Atlantic Monthly Press. 348 pp. $23.00.*

Reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

PAUL WILKES, a Catholic, has written several books about his own religion. One of them, *In Mysterious Ways: The Death and Life of a Parish Priest*, tells the story of a local priest in Natick, Massachusetts. This new book is a kind of sequel, following a rabbi and *his* congregation—this time in Worcester, Massachusetts—for a year.

The congregation is Beth Israel, a Conservative synagogue with a membership of 500 families. In several ways, Beth Israel is religiously a more observant and traditional congregation than most in the Conservative movement. It houses a Jewish day school (only 70 of the 550 Conservative synagogues in America can claim this distinction); perhaps as many as 20 per-

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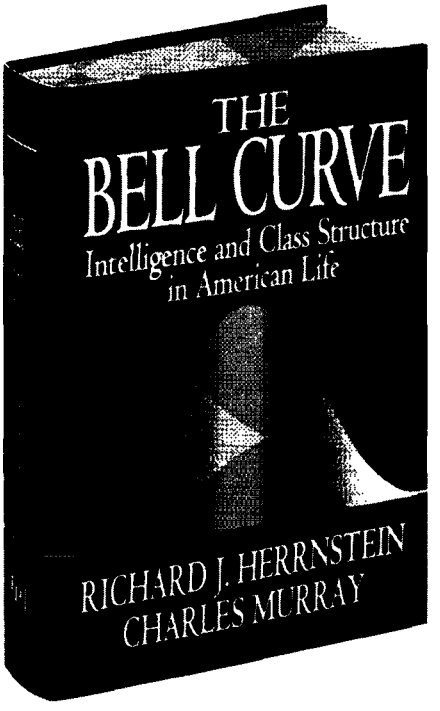

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cent of the congregants follow the laws of *kashrut*; and 40 members are sufficiently learned to be able to serve as readers of the Torah scroll (which requires memorizing the punctuation and vocalization of the text, as well as the musical notes in which it is chanted). Beth Israel's rabbi, not coincidentally, is a member of the Union for Traditional Judaism, the more traditional caucus within the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly.

Wilkes's hero, or at least his protagonist, is Rabbi Jay Rosenbaum, who is forty-two years old when the narrative begins. Born in the Bronx and raised in Levittown, Long Island, Jay Rosenbaum is the son of a rabbi, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary (where most Conservative rabbis are trained), and has been rabbi at Beth Israel for six years. This makes him a fairly typical example of today's Conservative rabbinate, and he is typical in other ways, too:

> The rabbi written about in these pages is not well known outside his congregation, and while he is certainly admired by his people, Rabbi Jay Rosenbaum has done nothing particular to distinguish himself outside this small world. He is not the author of a popular book; he is not sought out by talk-show hosts to convey the "Jewish point of view"; he is not renowned by any means.

It is clearly Wilkes's intention here to present a portrait not only of one rabbi and one synagogue, but of American Judaism in the 1990's. Thus his book contains a kind of primer on Judaism, Jewish sociology, and American Jewish history. This material, familiar to some readers, will be very valuable to others.

WHEN it comes to epitomizing the religious situation of most American Jews today, Wilkes has it about right: this is a community where some belong to synagogues but never go; some keep kosher, others keep kosher only at home, and still others not at all; some seek God but say they are "turned off" by synagogues, while still others lead a happily secular life. In brief, the problem facing contemporary American Jews is how to balance whatever pull they feel toward religious practice with the manifold attractions of American freedom. As Wilkes puts it:

> Should Jews attempt to live a life that appears so at odds with mainstream American culture? Perhaps no other religious group has found American soil so fertile for their personal aspirations, yet so antagonistic to the demands of their religious practice.

The resulting dilemma, as it is played out in actual day-to-day life, forms the heart of Wilkes's story as he introduces us to his cast of characters, Worcester Jews of all ages, professions, and degrees of attachment to or isolation from their religion. For it turns out in the course of *And They Shall Be My People* that not even a synagogue with an ostensibly high "traditionalist" profile like Beth Israel is immune to the permutations and compromises that characterize the religious life of American Jews today.

At Beth Israel, the principal fault line seems to run between the rabbi's search for ways to bring passion to his congregants and the congregants' tendency to reserve *their* passions for squabbling, and (no matter how much they admire him personally) for finding fault with their rabbi. The day school is accused of not paying enough rent to the synagogue. Synagogue membership is declining, and the board blames the rabbi. Enrollment in the nursery school is being surpassed by the nearby Reform temple. When the rabbi organizes a trip to Israel, the itinerary becomes the focus of an endless series of arguments.

As for the rabbi, he must placate all the rival forces, or his contract will not be renewed. For a decent but not terrific salary, he works 60 hours or more a week, his schedule destroyed by a funeral here, a hospital call there. While he is trying to build a religious community of committed Jews, he is judged by his work as administrator, social director, marriage counselor, orator.

Mutatis mutandis, this is surely the lot of any cleric in any denomination of any religion. But as Wilkes notes, it may be an especially trying one for Conservative rabbis. Among Orthodox Jews, the rabbi's flock is nearly as observant as he; among Reform, all are content, as it were, to share the lobster salad; but in Conservative synagogues, the typical rabbi preaches and practices a traditional Judaism while his people often pay it only lip service. On this point, Wilkes tellingly quotes Professor Neil Gillman of the Jewish Theological Seminary:

> [T]he Conservative movement did a remarkable thing, marrying the best of tradition and the best of what needed to change. Tradition and change. Our motto. But, internally, we stopped growing. And our rabbis are out there, feeling very lonely and isolated, wondering what to do next.

This is, literally, Rabbi Rosenbaum's problem. His own personal approach to Judaism is "straightforward," writes Wilkes:

> If an American born a Jew is to remain a Jew, he or she must *live* as a Jew, within America. Cultural Judaism, ethnic Jewish identity, high-holiday attendance, and *yiddishkeit* are not enough to sustain them.

And so he tells his congregation. But Rabbi Rosenbaum's passion is received by most of his congregants as scolding, his religious ambition as unwelcome pressure. By the end of this book, after six years of unending effort to build a true Jewish community, Rabbi Rosenbaum is informed by his board that he has made some members "uncomfortable with his demands for stricter Judaic observance and practice; he had asked for more than they were willing to give."

Wilkes notes the irony: for Jay Rosenbaum—and for his wife, Janine, whose story is in many ways the most affecting in this book—"being the rabbi of a Conservative congregation was exactly what was standing in the way of a fully religious life." One need not believe that the Rosenbaums' problems are universal, or that Beth Israel is typical of every congregation in America, to appreciate the troubling ac-

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curacy of the portrait Paul Wilkes has given us of American Jews in the 1990's.

Ground Zero

STALIN AND THE BOMB: THE SOVIET UNION AND ATOMIC ENERGY 1939-1956. BY DAVID HOLLOWAY. *Yale. 464 pp. $30.00.*

Reviewed by ADAM B. ULAM

FEW Americans, it is safe to say, lose sleep these days over the fact that Russia's arsenal of nuclear missiles is still sufficient to destroy us many times over, or because we do not know how tightly and by whom these weapons are guarded and controlled. Nor is the American public much concerned over the by-now considerable stockpile of these dreadful devices in the hands of the Chinese Communists. Russia today is our friend, and China is presumably too busy building capitalism to attack a country which buys billions of dollars'-worth of goods marked "Made in the PRC."

Such public complacency forms a startling contrast to the alarm felt at the news of the first Soviet nuclear test in 1949, and to the even more traumatic reaction when Mao's China acquired the bomb in 1964—not to mention those nerve-wracking moments during the Berlin and Cuban crises when Nikita Khrushchev indulged in ominous missile-rattling. Yet the problem of nuclear weapons remains central to the security and foreign policy of this country as well as to world peace. For help in understanding this problem and its many ramifications, we are greatly indebted to David Holloway's book.

First and foremost, this is the most exhaustive and instructive history we have yet had of the Soviet equivalent of our Manhattan Project. In writing it, Holloway, who teaches political science at Stanford, has profited by seeing hitherto-secret Soviet materials released under glasnost, as well as by the opportunity to interview Russian scientists who participated in research that led to the construction of the Soviet A- and H-bombs.

Holloway offers tantalizing glimpses of the personalities and a broad view of the science scene under Stalin. Early on, the project was put under the supervision of Lavrenti Beria, at the time Stalin's high executioner, i.e., overlord of the secret police. Holloway offers what must be one of the greatest understatements in the entire literature of Sovietology: "Beria," he writes, "was not an easy person to work for." To put it another way, the sinister commissar succeeded in instilling in his scientists a sense of urgency through methods which could not be matched by General Leslie Groves, his opposite number in the Manhattan Project; among other feats, Beria person-

ADAM B. ULAM *is the author of* The Communists: The Story of Power and Lost Illusions; Stalin; The Bolsheviks; *and many other books on Russian history and politics.*

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ally supervised the torture of a marshal of the Soviet Union.

Another helpful contribution of *Stalin and the Bomb* is Holloway's refutation of the idea that, had the U.S. shared information about the atomic bomb with the USSR, the nuclear arms race could have been avoided and the cold war need never have taken place.

It is amazing that in 1994 it is still necessary to rebut the myth of America's guilt in initiating the cold war, a myth once insistently propagated by our "revisionist" historians; but apparently this is still the case. Having sifted all the facts, Holloway concludes judiciously that, "There is little evidence that the United States was able to use the bomb to compel the Soviet Union to do things it did not want to do." We might go further and affirm that America's monopoly of nuclear weapons had but a minimal effect on Soviet moves and policies in the period immediately following World War II.

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Moreover, we can also dispute the notion that only the atomic bomb deterred the Red Army in that period from sweeping through Western Europe all the way to the English Channel. Though victorious, the USSR had been devastated by the war. We did not know then that its human losses were on the order of 25 million killed, but even the officially acknowledged figure of 7 million was huge. How then could a man as rational as Stalin (at least when it came to foreign affairs) provoke a war against a country, the U.S., whose industrial production at the time surpassed the rest of the world, and whose manpower resources had barely been scratched by the war?

That hardly means, however, that Stalin was stopped cold. America's exclusive hold on nuclear weapons may have aroused fear in the average Soviet citizen, or among Communists and left-wingers elsewhere in thrall to propaganda emanating from Moscow about the evil designs of "war mongers" and "imperialists" in Washington and London. But as for Stalin himself, he remained supremely confident that he could correctly gauge the mood of the American citizenry, and avoid a shooting war while carrying out his depredations in Eastern Europe.

Until 1950, Stalin's confidence was not misplaced. No one familiar with the political scene in those years can believe that the United States would have allowed itself to be stirred into drastic action against its recent ally, no matter what he did in Eastern Europe. Holloway does not explore whether and how a more enlightened Western diplomacy could have saved some semblance of independence for those unfortunate countries. But the fact is that Western statesmen came to believe that the only alternative to acquiescing in the Soviet rape of Eastern Europe was war, which they would not and could not risk. (Western Europe, of course, was another matter.)

It is arguable, indeed, that the existence of nuclear weapons *weakened* the hand of American diplomacy vis-à-vis the USSR, even before Moscow acquired them. To a democratic electorate, the mere prospect that sooner or later Moscow would one day also have the bomb made the idea of incurring even a slight risk of war over Eastern Europe all the more repellent and frightening. The resulting psychological constraints on Washington can be easily followed in the American press of the period. For this reason I find it difficult to agree with Holloway's assertion that the bomb, by itself, caused the Soviet Union to be "more restrained in its use of force."

Nuclear fears and the constraints they imposed on American diplomacy were magnified by news of the Soviet atomic bomb test in August 1949 and again in 1952-53 when both countries exploded the ultimate weapon: the hydrogen bomb. And experience since then confirms what common sense might have suggested: even a small quantity of nuclear weapons in the hands of a dictatorial regime goes far in offsetting the political advantage of an overwhelmingly greater nuclear stockpile at the disposal of a democratic state.

THE course of the Korean war, traced by Holloway in some detail, offers a vivid demonstration of this proposition. In 1950, after repeated pleas by Kim Il Sung, Stalin finally permitted North Korea to invade the South. Washington's unexpected reaction to the invasion—its full commitment to the defense of South Korea—for once shook the tyrant's confidence that he could always gauge America's reactions to Communist aggression. Yet almost immediately his anxiety was relieved: though the Truman administration rightly guessed that ultimate responsibility for the aggression rested with Moscow, the U.S. chose instead to punish Mao's China, by interposing the 7th Fleet between the People's Liberation Army and Taiwan.*

In the winter of 1950, when the American armies suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Chinese "volunteers," President Truman publicly raised the possibility

* Almost comically, the American note to the USSR of June 27, 1950 asked the Kremlin to disavow its responsibility for the "unprovoked and unwarranted act" by North Korea. Moscow was delighted to oblige.

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that he might resort to nuclear weapons. America's allies are usually credited with having persuaded him to refrain from that course, and also from carrying the war into the territory of the People's Republic. But what undoubtedly weighed heavily in these decisions was apprehension over what the Soviet Union might do should we wreak destruction on its ally, and a great part of that apprehension came from the knowledge that the USSR did possess a few nuclear bombs.

After the American counterattack in 1951, the Chinese commander, Peng Dehuai, pressed Mao for permission to seek a cease-fire along the 38th parallel. Holloway wonders why Stalin did not back that initiative; the answer is that once the danger of American nuclear retaliation had passed, Stalin saw no reason why the inconclusive fighting between the U.S.-UN forces and the Chinese should not go on for quite a while. Stalin's policy of bleeding both sides kept Mao dependent on the USSR for political support and military supplies, and made any Sino-American détente unthinkable. Although such a course was bound to increase China's bitterness against its "elder brother," this was of little concern to Stalin. He preferred to let his successors cope with that problem.

As Holloway shows, all this underwent a drastic change upon Stalin's death in March 1953. Without the man who, alone, knew how to run the phantasmagoric system and to keep the West at bay, his henchmen and successors hastened to lower the level of internal repression, sought an amelioration of their relations with the West, and, by appeasing China and freeing it to reach an armistice in Korea, tried to make up for Stalin's peremptory treatment of Mao.

At least one of them, we now know, would have been prepared to go even farther. The account of the July 1953 plenum of the Central Committee (published in the USSR in 1991) confirms that, in his bid to succeed his fellow Georgian in supreme power, none other than Lavrenti Beria intended to institute far-reaching changes in the Soviet Union's domestic and foreign policies. Instead, he was arrested on June 26 and shot in December. While some of the charges heaped on the head of the once-dreaded minister by his erstwhile colleagues must be taken with a grain of salt (e.g., a large quantity of female underwear was allegedly found amid the files in his ministry), it is incontrovertible that his program, including greater concern for the non-Russian nationalities, relief for the peasantry, and détente with the West, made him a harbinger of Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika.

Of particularly great interest is Beria's apparent willingness to agree to the unification of Germany on Western terms—that is, for the Soviets to give up East Germany. By the time of the July 1953 plenum of the Central Committee, that proposal was being characterized by Khrushchev and others as a crime befitting a secret Western agent, another idiotic charge against a man whose real crimes had been amply sufficient to deserve the ultimate penalty. But it is actually quite likely that, with the shock of Stalin's death, Beria was not alone in thinking that the USSR could not afford to continue the dictator's seeming unconcern about America's nuclear superior-

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ity, or tolerate a level of East-West tension that just might escalate into a nuclear confrontation.

In Washington, after all, the Eisenhower administration had just been installed, and there were ominous rumblings about "liberation" and the "rollback" of the Soviet sphere. The doctrine of "massive retaliation," while not officially enunciated, was already implied in the rhetoric of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. So the concern of Beria and others in the Soviet leadership would not have been altogether misplaced. By late June, however, such concern had already been exposed as excessive: the West watched passively as Soviet tanks and soldiers crushed the workers' revolt in East Germany.

And so, by 1955, Nikita Khrushchev could comfortably and safely denounce those (like the recently-deposed Georgi Malenkov) who had argued the need for conciliation of the West, or who had implied that a new world war would be disastrous for everybody. Why relieve the capitalists of the fear that, should they slight its legitimate security interests, the Soviet Union might act rashly? The proper propaganda formula, one to which the Soviet leaders would adhere until the late 1970's and did not explicitly abandon until Chernobyl, was this: as unpleasant as a nuclear war would be, socialism (i.e., the USSR) would not only survive but emerge victorious. Western statesmen could not but be made anxious by such bluff and bluster, especially coming from a Khrushchev.

HOLLOWAY concludes his book by paying homage to the Soviet physicists who worked on nuclear projects for their civil courage in challenging Soviet authority. But of the entire group, it was only Andrei Sakharov who unequivocally opposed Khrushchev's reckless nuclear diplomacy, while, earlier, Peter Kapitsa had shown incredible courage in defying Beria at the height of his power (and, miraculously enough, did not pay for this with his life).

All in all, though one can question some of David Holloway's arguments, *Stalin and the Bomb* is an admirable and indispensable contribution to a subject which will always remain relevant to world peace and to the survival of civilized life.

Brave New Family

REINVENTING THE FAMILY: THE EMERGING STORY OF LESBIAN AND GAY PARENTS. BY LAURA BENKOV. *Crown. 304 pp. $22.00.*

Reviewed by MIRIAM Z. WOLF

THERE is a baby boom now under way among homosexuals. Thanks to advances in technology and changes in the law, both homosexual individuals and homosexual couples are having and adopting children in record numbers; in the urban, socially-advanced communities where some of us live and are raising our children, such arrangements have increasingly become an element of our daily experience. In *Reinventing the Family*, Laura Benkov, a writer, a psychologist, and a lesbian mother, chronicles the shifts that have made possible this revolution in family life, and celebrates homosexual parenthood.

The traditional family structure is corrupt and increasingly irrelevant, Benkov announces, and the homosexual family is one of several new forms that have begun to take its place. For her, this marks a "moment of majestic proportions" in the evolutionary development of nature and mankind, equivalent to the moment when "fish [mutated] into reptiles" and when "cave dwellers [moved] into structures built with their own hands."

In accordance with this momentous transformation, Benkov confidently dismisses the categories of masculine and feminine as wholly artificial constructs—"gender roles," she calls them—which need not be associated with men

MIRIAM Z. WOLF *is a West-coast writer.*

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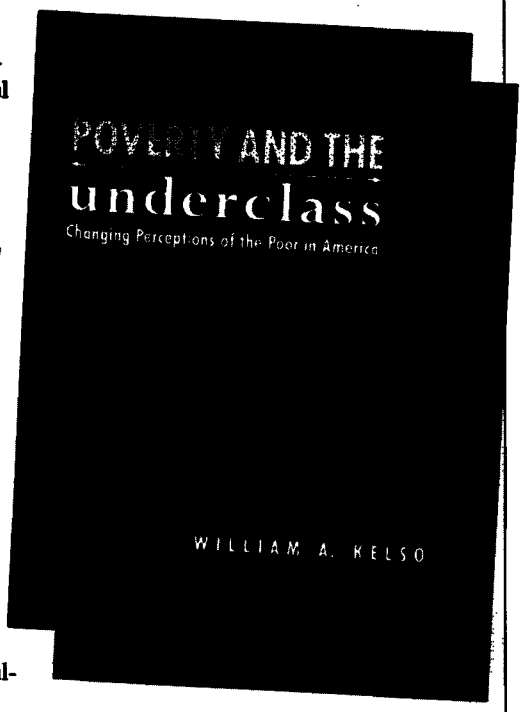

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or women at all. This means that the "shape" or "structure" of families is incidental, and so is the sex of parents. In fact, neither fatherhood nor motherhood is necessary for successful family life. As long as "relationships" are loving and caring, the sexual identity of the parties in them is a wholly irrelevant detail.

To illustrate how such "reinvented" families can operate in practice, Benkov introduces her readers to a collection of gay and lesbian parents whose stories she recounts. These so-called families come in a variety of configurations.

In some, homosexual couples have obtained children through legal adoption. In others, lesbians have had children after being inseminated by men with whom they are acquainted (and who may or may not remain involved with the children after birth) or by unknown men. In still another variant, homosexual men contract with uninvolved surrogate mothers, or with lesbians of their acquaintance with whom they share the children's upbringing. What all this means for the children is that some have one parent, some have two parents of the same sex, and some have two parents of different sexes, along with these parents' sexual partners who also form part of the "family" unit.

Benkov rejoices in the diversity of these arrangements. What is more, she represents virtually all of the families she describes as contented and prospering—the children cheerful, plucky, and proud.

But are they? Not if one judges by the evidence presented in this book. Although Benkov is at pains to highlight the best these homosexual families have to show, the strains within them are not easily hidden, even by an author who writes as a passionate advocate of their cause.

Take, for example, the story of the Southern poet Minnie Bruce Pratt, who realized in 1975, after a decade of marriage and two children, that she was a lesbian. Knowing it was unlikely the courts would permit her to keep her children, then aged seven and five, if she lived openly as a lesbian, Pratt had to choose between remaining with them or living with her lover. She opted for the latter course.

And what was the effect on her children? "Her older son," Benkov honestly reports, "screamed 'No! No! No!,' running in circles around the room like a trapped bird bouncing from wall to wall in search of a way out." Of course, Benkov blames his grief on the society that would not let his mother be herself—for Benkov, needless to say, "only a life of integrity [makes] sense." But whether society or, as some benighted individuals might contend, the mother herself was responsible for this child's pain, the pain itself can hardly be denied.

In fact, as is clear from the families one meets in this book, homosexual parents require major sacrifices from their children at every step of their development, including before they are born. One lesbian mother recounts to Benkov how she chose to be inseminated at a sperm bank rather than by a known donor, thus creating her son fatherless even though she knew he would come to resent it. (Her rationale, of which Benkov wholly approves: he could "be angry at me for my decision, rather than feel hurt because there's a man he can identify who doesn't behave as a father.") Another mother speaks blandly about her child's difficulty in shuttling between his father and his father's lover on the one hand, and her and her lover on the other:

> I think he suffers as any being would suffer from everything changing all the time. . . . He always has his little shopping bag and carries his blanket with him wherever he goes. I think he'll either grow up to be a person who will only be in one place and will be kind of rigid about it because he's had enough of this, or he'll be someone who any place he hangs his hat will be his home.

Of course one has to acknowl-

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edge that the children of divorced, heterosexual parents also travel back and forth between two homes, but divorce represents an acknowledged breakdown, whereas the division of this family was intentional from the start and, Benkov believes, an admirably innovative thing.

Children are not the only ones to suffer. While Benkov says it is fine for a child to have "two mommies," her examples illustrate how this can easily become a recipe for misery all around, with the children left to wonder which is their "real" mother, and the maternal duo either feeling redundant or struggling to suppress mutual envy. Benkov comments that this is "similar to what many heterosexual fathers say about their experience," ignoring the fact that unlike a lesbian "second mother," a father is not trying to duplicate his child's other parent.

ALTHOUGH Benkov's arguments are sloppy, tendentious, and presented in prose that seldom rises above psychobabble, her book is part of a serious movement—the movement for homosexual "rights"—that has gained considerable ground in American political life. Benkov's particular contribution is to locate the family as the essential battleground where this movement must next engage. The fight is not only over the right of individual homosexuals to adopt or become foster parents, but also over the legalization of adoptions by "second parents," so that a child may officially have two mothers or two fathers.

To side with Benkov in this matter is to believe, with her, that the idea that heterosexual unions "are somehow necessary to the survival of the species and therefore morally superior" is a "myth." Her book, ironically and inadvertently, undercuts this proposition rather severely. That, however, hardly settles the matter. The fight is on; and it remains to be seen whether, when push comes to shove, American society as a whole, and the American legal system in particular, will be prepared to go on protecting the most elementary and necessary arrangements for the care and nurturance of children.

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ARROGANT CAPITAL: WASHINGTON, WALL STREET, AND THE FRUSTRATION OF AMERICAN POLITICS. By KEVIN PHILLIPS. *Little, Brown. 231 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL CASSE

THE voters are angry—and so is Kevin Phillips. In this, his most recent political tract on the misguided course of American politics, Phillips marches us through a tour of Washington's corroded institutions and corrupt dealings, huffing and puffing all the way.

Arrogant Capital sports the enraged populist tone familiar to readers of Phillips's two previous books, *Boiling Point* and *The Politics of Rich and Poor.* Page after page, Phillips describes the current political landscape in a headache-inducing barrage of overheated rhetoric. Thus, Washington is an "interest-group fortress" resembling other "overbearing, overstuffed seats of power" run by a "powerful elite." Everywhere there are "parasites," "power-brokers," "courtiers," and "opinion-molding networks." On Capitol Hill, "gunslingers, card sharks, and faro-dealers" engage in a kind of back-scratching that amounts to "Potomac incest." American political power is controlled by a "guardian class" who have turned the capital into a city of "cliques, relationships, clubs, coalitions, lunch groups, networks, and cabals."

Phillips's book is peppered with portentous historical analogies to other great capitals that have seen the rise and fall of political power. In his entirely deterministic view of history, with its cycles, waves, tides, counterwaves, ebbs, and flows, "Imperial Washington" is heading the way of ancient Athens, Alexandria, and Pergamon. The new twist on

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this theme is that the 1990's may be a time for revolution. Just as the 1790's saw a revolution in constitutional government, and the 1890's witnessed a surge of progressive ideas, so the final decade of this century may pave the way for a radical restructuring of our political system.

Whether one is persuaded by this history lesson or not, the more important part of *Arrogant Capital* lies in its description of what Phillips takes to be the major sources of public discontent with Washington politics, followed by what he believes to be the necessary remedies. To him, the American constitutional system is outdated. The separation of powers that was designed to alleviate 18th-century fears about despotism today fosters a self-perpetuating, interest-group centrism. High-dollar lobbying dominates decision-making, and the influence of "financiers," speculators, and the Federal Reserve Board preempts any genuine economic reform (i.e., higher taxes on the wealthy).

As special interests have made representative democracy impossible, what is needed is a system of national referenda to give citizens more control over their government and end the duopoly of two-party rule. As for the federal bureaucracies, they should be shipped out of Washington to various sites around the country, lowering the concentration of government activity in a single city. Direct democracy, conducted largely by citizens outside of Washington, may be the only way to reform our failed system.

IF THESE ideas sound familiar, it is because they are not new. Nearly all of them were central to Ross Perot's 1992 presidential campaign. Nearly all of them have been the staples of populist (and often demagogic) crusades against Washington. And nearly all of them have begun to receive favorable treatment from anti-establishment Republicans, some of whom believe this neopopulist formula is the best way for their party to reclaim the trust of the voters and, in the process, the White House.

But one need only scratch the surface of Phillips's direct-democracy agenda to see that there is a lot more bluster than substance to it. Consider what I take to be the four central ideas in his blueprint for reform:

1. *End divided government.* Like many other critics of contemporary politics, Phillips finds the notion that our government should be rigidly divided among separate but equal powers an antiquated idea. His chief complaint is that maintaining three different branches of government allows interest groups to exploit any gap, blocking policy at will.

Yet he provides little evidence for this claim. Despite all the noise about gridlock, the federal government has in recent years managed to pass much legislation over the opposition of special interests. Even the last session of Congress, notorious for the supposedly unprecedented level of obstruction that was mounted against the Clinton administration's agenda, nevertheless passed a substantial tax increase, the NAFTA free-trade agreement, the Brady bill, and a controversial crime measure, all of which were subject to intense opposition from lobbies. And even under the Bush administration, when the executive and legislative branches were held by opposing parties, many sweeping new programs were enacted, again over the efforts of well-organized lobbies.

Of course, the separation of powers makes it easier to stop many bills from becoming law. But Phillips never argues that the country would have been better off if those bills had passed. Instead, he offers a few unpersuasive arguments that a more united, collaborative form of government would increase responsibility, decrease fingerpointing, and lead to more efficient economic management. Yet that certainly has not been the experience of countries like Canada, Britain, Italy or many other nations with parliamentary systems of the kind Phillips favors.

2. *Create a system of national referenda.* Like Ross Perot, Phillips

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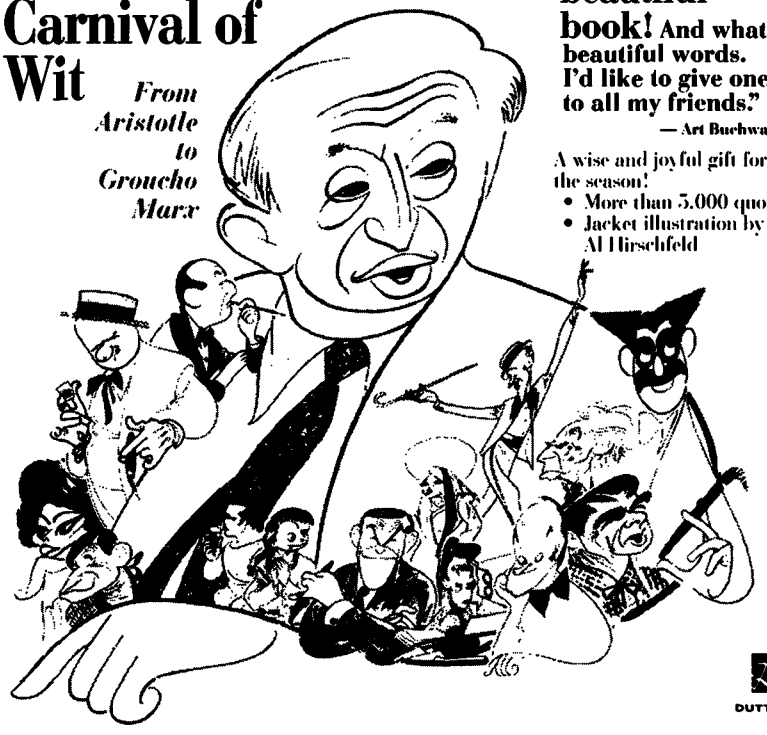

DUTTON

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would like to see an amendment to the Constitution according to which major issues of national policy would be decided by ballot initiative and referenda. The possibility of one day conducting this process electronically seems to excite him even more. But whether done by ballot or modem, national referenda raise many troubling questions Phillips never seriously entertains.

The most obvious has to do with foreign policy, and whether citizens should be allowed to direct the course of that policy by an up-or-down vote. Another is how to prevent a system of national ballot questions from devolving into brute majoritarianism. (This was Alexander Hamilton's concern during the constitutional convention in Philadelphia.)

Even if these issues are set aside, Phillips deludes himself and his readers in suggesting that national referenda would remedy popular revulsion over current politics. Many states already use the referendum and initiative process—with mixed success—to make decisions about tax cuts and increases, education funding, and so on. But increasingly, voters in these states are being asked to express opinions on subjects ranging from gay rights, to euthanasia, to whether bait can be used in bear hunting.

Surely some voters have strong opinions on these matters. But should the entire country engage in high-profile national debates about them and others of that kind? And would that actually give citizens more control over the process? What we know about state-ballot questions is that each stage of the process, from signature collection to advertising, has become increasingly professionalized and controlled by the very political consultants, special-interest lobbying campaigns, and professional opinion experts that were part of the problem in the first place.

3. *Move executive offices out of Washington.* As with most of Phillips's other suggestions, what sounds good in a political speech looks rather different when one considers the effect it would have.

Phillips believes that moving the Department of Agriculture to Des Moines and the Interior Department to Denver, or having Congress spend half its session in a Western city, would "spread the influence mongers thinner." The more likely outcome would be the further growth of already huge federal agencies and an expansion of the lobbyist culture to places that are still happily without it. Choosing where departments would be relocated would alone create a bidding war not seen since Texas won the (now-defunded) Supercollider project.

Transferring agencies out of Washington, in the end, is a game of moving boxes on an organization chart. It does nothing to address the sheer size and scope of the federal government. If the Department of Housing and Urban Development is full of waste and fraud now, it is not likely to be otherwise once reestablished on the south side of Chicago.

4. *Curb the role of lobbies, interest groups, and lawyers.* This is surely the most unobjectionable proposal Phillips has to offer. But it turns out he has no real insight into the problem he proposes to fix. Thus, he goes through shopworn statistics about the growth of lawyers and lobbyists, but does not or cannot explain why this growth occurred.

In the case of interest groups, part of the reason has to do with campaign-finance laws, which make it financially more advantageous for groups to contribute to a candidate than for individuals. In the case of Washington lawyers, part of the answer lies in the explosive growth of regulation, especially in the highly technical and legalistic fields of health care and telecommunications. But in both cases, Phillips sees only the individual lobbyist or lawyer who, in his view, is charging too much by the hour. His solutions inevitably involve some new federal law that would cap, restrict, or tax such income.

Phillips's overriding preoccupation with how much money people are making blinds him to the more serious and detrimental influences on Washington politics. He can write for pages in conspiratorial tones about Wall Street investment firms, Republican Team 100 donors, and Federal Reserve bank presidents. But he has hardly a word to say about the teachers' unions or the trial lawyers' association, which exercise far more power over Congress's legislative agenda.

IF THERE is a unifying weakness in Phillips's scenario, it is that his solutions are almost entirely procedural rather than substantive. It is revealing and fitting that for the epigraph to his final, summary chapter he quotes two men: Thomas Jefferson and . . . David Gergen. Like Gergen, Phillips wants to think about Washington while avoiding any serious consideration of ideological or policy differences. He is convinced that a system with fewer battles will be a better system.

And that is what makes Phillips's brand of populism so empty. Throughout this book, he mourns the passing of once-in-a-generation elections that can revolutionize government and shift the direction of the country. But the revolution he seeks already occurred. That was during the 1980's, when liberalism fell to Reaganism.

The legacy of that revolution continues to be debated now. Phillips, however, is not interested in the battle of ideas that has shaped the last decade of politics. He is interested only in the raw, undifferentiated anger of the public which, while very real, is misread by him as a profound populist statement. The result is a book about our nation's political system that rails endlessly against a series of bogeymen—lobbyists, lawyers, insiders—without ever focusing on what the federal government actually does, let alone on what might actually be done to improve it.

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U.S. Forces on the Golan Heights?

A Special Report

On October 25, the Center for Security Policy in Washington, D.C., released an in-depth study, conducted by eleven eminent experts, on the idea of stationing U.S. forces on the Golan Heights as an element of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria. This study seems to us so thorough and definitive in its analysis of an issue crucial to the U.S., to Israel, and to the relations between them that we are departing from our normal editorial practice by publishing it in its original form.

The authors of the report are:

General John Foss (USA, Ret.)	Commanding General, Training and Doctrine Command 1989-91; formerly responsible for U.S. forces in the Sinai.
General Al Gray (USMC, Ret.)	Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps 1987-91.
Lieutenant General John S. Pustay (USAF, Ret.)	Assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff 1979-81; President, National Defense University 1981-83.
General Bernard Schriever (USAF, Ret.)	Commander, U.S. Air Force Systems Command 1959-66.
Admiral Carl Trost (USN, Ret.)	Chief of Naval Operations 1986-90.
Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. (USN, Ret.)	Chief of Naval Operations 1970-74.
Douglas J. Feith	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense 1984-86; Middle East specialist, National Security Council 1981-82.
Frank J. Gaffney, Jr.	Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense 1987; Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense 1983-87.
Richard Perle	Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy 1981-87.
Eugene V. Rostow	Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1981-83; Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs 1966-69.
Henry S. Rowen	Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs 1989-91; Chairman, National Intelligence Council, Central Intelligence Agency 1981-83.

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I. Introduction

As part of its search for a "comprehensive" peace, Israel is negotiating an agreement with Syria that is expected to entail Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and possibly, over time, the complete return of the Heights to Syria. Relinquishment of this territory is a sensitive military and political issue, not just in Israel but also in the United States, because Israel expects that compensatory security arrangements will include the deployment of American troops to the Golan as monitors or peacekeepers.

This study evaluates the benefits and costs to the United States of such a Golan mission for the U.S. armed forces. The benefits—that is, the rationale for such a deployment—divide into three categories: monitoring, deterrence, and support for a Syrian-Israeli peace. The study concludes that the costs—undertaking of risks, commitment of resources, and transformation of the U.S. role in the region—would substantially outweigh any benefits. It concludes that the United States should not deploy its troops on the Golan Heights and that the cause of peace would not in fact be served by such a deployment. This study does not attempt to weigh the merits of the Arab-Israeli negotiating process or the resulting or anticipated accords. Nor does it purport to judge whether Israel should withdraw from the Golan Heights in pursuit of peace with Syria. Indeed, the signatories to this study represent a range of opinions regarding Israel's peace policies and the issue of Israeli territorial concessions to Syria.

Israel is a sovereign state and does not require leave from outsiders, even its friends, to make its own national-security calculations regarding peace opportunities and military risks. The issue of U.S. forces on the Golan, however, does not lie solely within Israel's sovereign prerogatives. It involves the lives of Americans and the national interests of the United States. Americans have a right and duty to evaluate this issue independently.

Finally, this study does not exhaustively examine the policy considerations relating to a U.S. troop deployment on the Golan. In the absence of more detailed information about the size, nature, responsibilities, level of armament, rules of engagement, mission definition, and other characteristics of the U.S. peacekeeping force, this study aims only to identify major considerations that would apply irrespective of the specific form of the deployment.

II. Background

The Golan Heights

The Golan is a semi-mountainous escarpment of some 400 square miles, ranging in height from 400 to 3,000 feet. It rises steeply from the eastern and northern shores of the Sea of Galilee, runs the length of the Huleh Valley, and overlooks the coastal plains of the Galilee and northern Israel.

At the end of World War I, during the division of the defeated Ottoman empire, the Golan Heights were included in the territory of British Mandate Palestine. In 1923 they were transferred to French Mandate Syria under a Franco-British agreement delineating the boundary between Mandate Syria and Mandate Palestine. After Israel declared independence in 1948 and defeated the Syrian and other Arab forces that invaded to destroy the new state, that boundary became the basis for the Syrian-Israeli armistice line negotiated in 1949.

For the next eighteen years, until the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Syria used its position on the Heights to shell Israeli farms and settlements in the Galilee below and to attack Israeli water projects in the Huleh Valley. Syrians on the Golan attempted to divert the headwaters of the Jordan River, which would have severely curtailed Israel's water supply. Israel used military force to oppose the diversion.

Israeli soldiers captured the Heights in the Six-Day War of 1967. Six years later, at the outbreak of the October 1973 Yom Kippur War, Syria mounted a massive armored attack into the territory. In a costly stand, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stopped the

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Syrian thrust across the Golan and then counterattacked, driving a fifteen-mile bulge into Syria. Israel later withdrew from this bulge, but stayed on the Heights. In December 1981, Israel enacted legislation extending its civil law and administration to the Golan, replacing the military authority which had ruled there for fourteen years.

Since 1967 and the subsequent attempt in 1973 to retake the Heights, Syria has used various means, including terrorism and diplomacy, to press Israel to relinquish the Golan. Successive Israeli governments, under both Labor and Likud, have characterized the Golan Heights as essential to Israeli security.

The Strategic Importance to Israel of the Golan Heights

First, holding the Heights gives Israel *strategic depth.* The Golan territory is roughly 10 miles by 40 miles. All of Israel, including the Golan and the West Bank, is only approximately 45 miles wide by 270 miles. (First-time visitors to Israel almost invariably remark on how small the country is.) Thus, in the north, the Golan makes the territory under Israel's control nearly 50-percent wider than it would be otherwise. This buffer zone, this extension of territory where Israel faces its most formidable enemy, is an important military asset for Israel. As will be explained in greater detail below, this remains true even in the age of missile warfare. It bears noting that, in the summer of 1990, all of Kuwait's valuable assets were in easy reach of Iraq's forces, which took them quickly. But Saudi Arabia's key assets lay across wide stretches of desert, which made an Iraqi conquest far more difficult. Though Iraq had Scud missiles, Saudi Arabia's strategic depth spared it the fate of Kuwait.

Second, control of high ground on the Golan gives Israel direct line-of-sight *surveillance and warning* of threatening Syrian movements in the plains below or in south Lebanon. Early warning is important to a defense posture that relies, in the event of war, upon a thin line of active forces to hold while reserves mobilize to meet the kind of attacks that Syria's large and well-equipped standing army might mount.

Third, modern technology has by no means eliminated altogether the *disadvantages of having to fight uphill,* a reality acknowledged by military commanders everywhere. The operational planning of the U.S. military, for example, still places great emphasis on command of the high ground as a critical force multiplier.

Fourth, possession of the Golan puts the IDF within *easy striking range of Damascus.* This contributes to Israeli deterrence against Syria. If deterrence fails and war occurs again, Israel's Golan position enables it to mount spoiling attacks against likely staging areas. And its proximity to Damascus can help deter especially heinous actions—for example, missile attacks on Israel's cities.

Fifth, the Golan highlands are a *major watershed.* In that arid region, with its growing population increasing the demand for water, control of water resources can have strategic consequences. The significance of this point is often overlooked in military and political analyses, especially those not produced locally. Control of the Golan permits control of Lake Kinneret (the "Sea of Galilee") which supplies roughly 30 percent of Israel's consumption.

Control of the Golan watershed and the Kinneret basin will further increase in importance if Israel makes concessions regarding its other main source of water, the watersheds of the West Bank. Water sources there now satisfy more than 33 percent of Israel's needs. These are at issue in Israel's negotiations with the PLO.

Demilitarization

One of the key security arrangements envisioned for a Syrian-Israeli agreement involving Israeli withdrawal on or from the Golan is demilitarization of the territory from which the Israeli forces are withdrawn. Some analysts expect Israel also to insist that additional Syrian land beyond that territory be demilitarized or made subject to force limitations, perhaps in return for Israel's agreement to limit its own forces on the Israeli side of the border.

IDF Major General (Res.) Moshe Bar-Kochba has noted:

> The Syrians are now able to shift the main body of their military force against Israel

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within one night. Demilitarization must be such that it does not allow them to marshall their forces so fast; that is, they must be removed to north of Damascus.[1]

Other military officers sympathetic to the Rabin government's general diplomatic policy toward Syria have made similar arguments. According to Major General (Res.) Avigdor Ben Gal, "It is important that in reality a buffer zone emerge, without any armies, and this zone must include two elements—the Golan Heights and *all of south Syria.*"[2] And Major General (Res.) Abraham Tamir, who had responsibility for designing the security arrangements for the Sinai in the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, has called for

a buffer consisting of: a demilitarized Golan; the Horan [the area of Syria immediately to the east of the Golan Heights] in which there will not be more than a mechanized division; and south Syria, the Golan, and the Horan demilitarized from military aircraft and missiles.[3]

Notwithstanding any demilitarization arrangement, it would be far easier for Syrian forces in a war to remilitarize the Golan from the plateau behind the Heights than for Israel to return from below. The Syrians could move two to three divisions unhindered into the Golan overnight from their staging area around Damascus, even if Syria accepted an additional 40-km. demilitarized zone extending beyond the Heights. If Syria seized control of a demilitarized Golan, it would be difficult and costly for Israel to move armor up the Heights under fire. The IDF would have to fight its way up the steep, almost sheer cliffs that face the Israeli side.

Demilitarizing a large portion of south Syria beyond the Golan Heights would mitigate but not eliminate altogether the risks to Israel of withdrawal from the Golan. Demilitarization agreements between adversaries are inherently brittle. The history of Germany's reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936 illustrates the point. Pledges by democratic states to respond promptly and forcefully to any violation of an arms-control arrangement with a nondemocratic state have often proven hollow when the time for action came. This was true for the Allies after World War I, for the United States during the cold war, and for Israel after signing the peace treaty with Egypt.

So, as desirable as the actual demilitarization of south Syria might be, Israel's security ultimately depends not on a demilitarization arrangement that Syria might or might not respect indefinitely but on the IDF's ability to prevail over Syrian forces if Syria were to renew military hostilities—and on the costs of such a victory.

While the Golan's most difficult and most elevated terrain faces Israel, the topography on the northern and eastern sides facing Syria also constitutes a defensible barrier to massed armored attack. During the 1973 Yom Kippur War, control of the Golan's rocky highlands enabled two brigades of the IDF to hold off an attack of over 1,000 Syrian tanks.

Israel's current Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Ehud Barak, has recently reiterated that, even under conditions of peace, the IDF must remain deployed on the Golan. Major General (Res.) Yossi Peled, the previous commander of the IDF Northern Command, which has operational control of the Golan, warned in December 1993 that an Israeli withdrawal from the Heights would constitute "national suicide." If Israel found itself at war again with Syria, General Peled doubted that Israel could ever retake the Golan as it did in the 1967 war, because of the changes since then in the balance of forces.[4]

Strategic Depth in the Age of Missiles

Even in the missile age, land—strategic depth—still matters. The Syrians have missiles. But they are still investing heavily in their ground forces. Major General Uri Sagi, head of the IDF Intelligence Branch, noted in April 1993:

. . . In the conventional field, Syria has improved and is improving its tank fleet in

[1] *Hadashot*, August 9, 1991.
[2] *Ha'aretz*, October 6, 1992; emphasis added.
[3] *Yediot Aharonot*, January 30, 1994.
[4] Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Bulletin No. 13, April 1994.

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a very impressive manner. If and when Syria will complete its procurement transactions that it has already signed, all of its armored divisions will be equipped with the latest model T-72 tanks. Today Syria has over 4,000 tanks and 300 self-propelled artillery tubes that provide it with an enhanced offensive capability in land battles.[5]

Many Middle Eastern nations are working to acquire ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction, and many of these nations maintain a longstanding hostility toward Israel. Nevertheless, the principal threat to Israel's existence for the foreseeable future will remain the danger of a physical invasion and occupation by heavily armored forces.

Simply stated, even though missiles can fly over the highest terrain feature, including the Golan Heights, they do not negate the strategic significance of territorial depth. The military value of missiles depends on their accuracy—on their ability to strike specific military targets. Inaccurate missiles like the Scuds used by Iraq in the Gulf war can terrorize large urban areas. But they are not reliable against military targets—airfields, command-and-control centers, bridges—where precision is required.

If, however, the Syrians—by violating a demilitarization regime, for example—were able to move heavy artillery up to the edge of the Golan escarpment overlooking the Galilee and northern Israel, they could use their relatively accurate artillery against military targets within a range of approximately 25 miles, depending on their ability to observe and correct fire. Artillery munitions, of which Syria has large quantities, are relatively inexpensive, especially compared to missiles. Destroying significant military targets within this range would be a matter, in essence, of firing enough rounds.

On the other hand, if Israeli control of the Golan ensured that Syrian artillery were confined to the plateau behind the Heights, few targets in Israel would be within range of the Syrian artillery. The Syrians could attempt to strike those targets with ballistic missiles, but then they would encounter the problem of inaccuracy, not to mention the prohibitive cost and limited number of weapons in inventory. Also, the United States and Israel both have programs to develop defenses against ballistic missiles. Given adequate resources, these programs could substantially limit the military effectiveness of offensive missiles. There are, however, no defenses available against artillery other than counterfire to destroy the artillery pieces themselves, which is a task of great difficulty, especially in rugged terrain like that of the Golan Heights.

What is more, succeeding with missile attacks on distant military targets would be nearly impossible, in part because the essential function of damage assessment would not be possible for Syrian missileers well behind the Golan. (Targeting and damage-assessment abilities would, however, be enhanced if Syria gained access to high-quality, real-time satellite imaging.[6]) In short, possession of intermediate-range ballistic missiles does *not* give Syria a capability to fight Israel as effectively from behind the Golan Heights as it could from the Heights themselves.

Achieving military success in a war requires more than lobbing a few score (or even a few hundred) missiles of limited accuracy at soft targets. Iraq fired approximately 40 Scuds at Israel in the Gulf war, killing fewer than 10 civilians and no soldiers and achieving nothing of military significance. To win a war against Israel, Syria must move armor, infantry, and artillery forward and down into Israeli proper, and then destroy Israeli forces on the ground. This was true in 1948, it was true in 1967 and 1973, and it remains true in today's Age of Missiles.

Land for Peace

Proponents of a Golan withdrawal commonly state that "peace is a better basis for security than territory." That assertion is essentially a political, not a military, judgment. If a military officer, for example, makes this assertion, his opinion on the reliability of a peace treaty with the Assad regime carries no special weight because of his military status. No military expert in Israel (or anywhere else)

[5] *Yediot Aharonot*, April 5, 1993.

[6] This is one reason why strong concerns are being expressed about the proposal now being considered by the Clinton administration to allow one of Syria's sometime allies, Saudi Arabia, to acquire access to—and control over—one-meter resolution satellite imagery.

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argues that, *in the event of war*, Syrian possession of the Heights would not matter. The argument that "peace is better than territory" is valid only as long as there *is* peace. But if war were to break out again, no one can seriously suggest that Israel would be better off holding a treaty signed by Assad than holding the Golan Heights.

Israel would, of course, be more secure if it actually enjoyed peace—that is, if its neighbors no longer aspired to destroy it. Indeed, having peaceable neighbors is a safer and more desirable basis for securing one's country than retaining various military assets. This is simply another way of saying that one is better off not having to defend oneself than being able to defend oneself effectively.

Whether it is likely that Israel, through a peace agreement with the Assad government, can achieve a permanent end to hostility with Syria is a question beyond the scope of this study. Nor does this study assess whether the chances of achieving peace with Syria at present outweigh the military risks (discussed above) inherent in Israel's relinquishment of Golan territory.

III. Analysis of the U.S. Mission on the Golan

A MILITARY commander on a mission—whether combat or peacekeeping—requires a clear statement of the nature of the mission: what is supposed to be accomplished? The commander also must know the criteria by which success is measured and when the mission is deemed completed—that is, when the troops can come home.

Regarding the possible deployment of U.S. troops on the Golan, the mission or rationale has never been spelled out by Israeli or American officials with any precision. There are three categories of mission or function that might apply to a deployment: (1) *monitoring*; (2) *deterrence*; and (3) *demonstrating U.S. support.*

Examining each in turn, we ask what U.S. forces on the Golan can realistically be expected to accomplish, whether the mission is feasible *without* a commitment of U.S. forces (i.e., can it be done at less cost and with less risk?), and what are the likely but unanticipated harmful consequences of assigning such a mission to U.S. troops.

MONITORING

A MONITORING mission might focus either on (1) the monitoring of military activity for purposes of early warning and military intelligence; or (2) monitoring the parties' compliance with the peace agreement.

1. Military Intelligence: Neither Israel nor Syria would in fact look to U.S. monitors (or those of a multinational force) to provide early warning of the other side's significant military activities. That kind of military-intelligence collection and analysis is an essential national-security function. Neither country would shift such a function to outsiders. Although a country might, under certain circumstances, choose to rely to some extent on another country for military intelligence, this is less likely to be the case when the second country is doing its monitoring *not as an ally*, but as an impartial or neutral observer, as would be the status of any U.S. forces deployed on the Golan under an Israeli-Syrian agreement.

Israel would not look to "peace monitors" for military intelligence because its margins of safety are thin and its defensive military doctrine and security hinge on accurate and timely intelligence, unfiltered by foreign interests, and, most especially, on prompt warning of military threats. Syria would not because its relations with the United States will remain cool and mutually distrustful for the foreseeable future even if the Assad government signs a peace agreement with Israel.

***Finding:** U.S. troops on the Golan are not required—and would not be relied upon—to provide military intelligence and early warning.*

2. Treaty Compliance: The U.S. troops could help perform the function of monitoring the parties' respective compliance with an agreement. This is a realistic function of some value. But it could be performed effectively without the permanent

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stationing of U.S. troops on the Heights, with all the attendant costs and risks of such a deployment (as set forth below). If a compliance issue arises and a party wants American personnel to serve as "honest brokers" to mediate the issue or monitor specific treaty conditions, that party could invite those personnel in on a case-by-case basis. The best U.S. personnel for that function, moreover, might not be military.

Finding: *There is no need for the United States to undertake an expensive, risky, and open-ended commitment of troops to carry out the relatively minor (and not inherently military) task of serving occasionally as a third-party referee on compliance issues.*

DETERRENCE

SOME commentators suggest that U.S. forces on the Golan could help deter Syria from violating a peace agreement and attacking Israel militarily in the future. How might the U.S. forces fulfill this function? Are they to serve as a deterrent on the military level—i.e., the forces themselves would be a military factor in the calculations of a Syrian military commander—or are they to serve simply as a contribution to deterrence on the political level?

1. Military Deterrence: There are two ways the forces could function as a military deterrent: either (a) the U.S. deployment would be large enough to serve as an effective military barrier to a future Syrian military offensive; or (b) the U.S. deployment would serve as a "tripwire" to ensure that such a Syrian offensive would trigger a large American military intervention to oppose it.

A. EFFECTIVE MILITARY BARRIER: No one has suggested that the United States deploy to the Golan a force with the numbers and types of men and equipment that would allow it to serve as a military barrier against Syria's large armored forces. As noted above, Syria has over 4,000 tanks and 300 self-propelled artillery pieces. A fully-equipped U.S. brigade is probably the maximum force that might be used here. More likely there would be an even smaller deployment—perhaps as few as 800 lightly-armed troops.

Washington's own decision-making mechanisms could preclude U.S. forces in any event from playing an active role in a crisis in the narrow Golan theater of operations. Dore Gold, director of the U.S. Foreign Policy Project at Israel's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, has observed:

> By far the most complex and sensitive element involved in the deployment of U.S. forces on the Golan Heights is the decision-making process on the U.S. side, in the event that a real Syrian threat is created. Would the U.S. really order its force to open fire on the Syrians? How much time would the American political system require to make this decision? Given the narrow confines of the Golan theater, the American reaction time has to be especially rapid. Yet American forces would almost certainly not be allowed to react virtually automatically. Israel will be dependent upon political decision-making in Washington.[7]

B. TRIPWIRE: Some commentators have spoken of the contemplated U.S. deployment as a "tripwire"—that is, a device to ensure that a future Syrian aggression would more or less automatically trigger a substantial U.S. military intervention to defend Israel. This is an idea of enormous strategic importance. It is the concept most likely to affect Israeli public opinion about the security risks of territorial withdrawal in favor of Syria. The concept deserves the most intense scrutiny, for it represents the gravest danger to U.S. interests.

If U.S. forces on the Golan are intended to be a tripwire, this connotes that Israel would become, like South Korea and the NATO states, an ally dependent to some extent on U.S. armed forces for its security. An attack on Israel by Syria would be treated as an attack on the United States, which would be obliged, legally or practically, to enter the war. This would be a radical departure from the traditions of the U.S.-Israeli relationship and the traditions of U.S. Middle East policy in general.

A major element of Israel's reason for being, a key source of Israel's national pride,

[7] "U.S. Forces on the Golan Heights and Israeli-Syrian Security Arrangements," Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Memorandum No. 44, August 1994.

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and a principal basis for U.S. popular support for the U.S.-Israeli relationship has always been the self-reliance of the IDF. Though outside material support has been important to it, especially since 1967, Israel has never requested or desired U.S. forces to risk their lives in its defense. In addition to the metaphysical reasons for Israeli military self-reliance, there are practical grounds for Israel's preferring not to rely on outside commitments that, in a crisis, may not be fulfilled or fulfillable. These practical grounds should give U.S. policy-makers pause about offering such commitments:

• As noted, a tripwire arrangement would create, in essence, a mutual-defense alliance between Israel and the United States. Such an alliance, however, could not be built on a trilateral peacekeeping agreement including Syria. It would require a formal defense treaty between Israel and the United States, duly ratified with the approval of the U.S. Senate. It would be reckless for Americans or Israelis to suppose that U.S. forces on the Golan could in fact function as a tripwire in the absence of such a formal treaty commitment. The United States has an interest in preserving the credibility of its commitments, so it should actively disabuse any Israelis who think of U.S. peacekeepers on the Golan as a tripwire.

• The question arises: is a U.S. tripwire force on the Golan in the U.S. national interest, assuming the commitment could be duly formalized? If this question were posed directly to Israeli or American officials, their answer would undoubtedly be negative. The chief reason is that Israel can now defend itself *without* the use of U.S. troops. There is no reason for the United States to undertake now to enter into a war if its intervention may not be necessary. Moreover, if intervention by U.S. forces were necessary to defend Israel in the event of renewed Syrian aggression, it is not likely—given current constraints on U.S. military capabilities, especially in the field of sea- and air-lift—that the United States could make the necessary intervention in a timely fashion. Months were required to get U.S. forces in place and ready for action in the recent Persian Gulf conflict. As a former Israeli Prime Minister observed, when asked about U.S. security guarantees for Israel: "By the time you get here, we won't be here."

• Might U.S. peacekeeping forces on the Golan serve a useful tripwire-like function even in the absence of a formal U.S. defense commitment to Israel? It has been suggested that, even if a U.S. military response to renewed Syrian aggression against Israel were not legally mandated or automatic, the probability of such a response would increase if U.S. troops were placed in harm's way (i.e., in the path of the Syrian forces) on the Golan.

Here again, the United States has an interest in discouraging its Israeli friends from harboring unrealistic expectations. Israel should not count on a peacekeeping force functioning as a mechanism that can be relied upon to engage the United States deeply on Israel's behalf in the event of another war with Syria. Were a future Syrian attack to injure or kill U.S. peacekeeping forces on the Golan, the U.S. government might decide to remove the peacekeeping force altogether rather than reinforce the troops. Recall the history of the Marines in Lebanon in 1983 and U.S. forces in Somalia in 1993, where the killing of American personnel triggered a hasty withdrawal rather than a deepening of the U.S. commitment.

Finding: *It would be irresponsible and unconstitutional for the U.S. government to deploy troops to the Golan as mere "peacekeepers" or "monitors" if the actual purpose were to create a tripwire. And it would be irresponsible to allow our Israeli friends to think that that is what U.S. forces on the Golan would constitute.*

2. Political Deterrence: Even if U.S. troops on the Golan did not contribute to military deterrence—as a tripwire or otherwise—might they not be justified as a contribution to deterrence at the political level? In other words, would they not make it less likely that Syria would renew hostilities with Israel, given the added danger of confrontation with the United States?

In the event (1) Israel and Syria sign a peace agreement; (2) Israel withdraws from the Golan under that agreement; and (3) Syria, at some point in the future, decides to launch an attack on Israel to capitalize on that Israeli withdrawal, Syria would know that its aggression would antagonize the United States *whether or not U.S. troops were*

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stationed on the Golan. At most, such troops could serve as a marginal factor in Syria's calculations.

The real political deterrent to Syrian aggression is not U.S. troops on the Golan, but the strength of U.S. ties to Israel and the certainty of U.S. support for a swift and effective Israeli response to such aggression. This deterrent requires no U.S. troops on the Golan.

Finding: *Stationing U.S. troops on the Golan would be buying an item of little or no deterrence value at a very high price.*

3. Increased Reliance on Preemption: In 1967, Israel did not control "the territories." In the face of intense threats from the Arab side, and following Egypt's act of war in blockading the Straits of Tiran at the mouth of the Gulf of Eilat, Israel's leaders felt compelled to preempt the anticipated military attack against it. In 1973, however—with "the territories," including the Golan, under its control—Israel reacted to intelligence of Syrian and Egyptian war preparations by choosing to forgo preemption and to absorb the first blow. If Israel withdraws on or from the Golan, it will have to return to its old posture and increase its reliance on preemption, for it will have no buffer permitting absorption of a first blow.

The problems inherent in this development would be exacerbated by the presence of U.S. troops on the Golan. Such troops would be more likely to deter *Israeli* military action—action required for the defense of common U.S. and Israeli interests—than Syrian military aggression.

If Israel, having withdrawn from Golan territory, receives serious "indicators and warnings" (I&W) of Syrian aggression and decides it must strike Syria preemptively, the presence of U.S. troops on the Golan will necessitate its soliciting the U.S. government's consent. American officials can be expected to treat the I&W reservedly, even skeptically, and to counsel patience and additional diplomacy. The United States is never quick to launch a war or flash an ally a green light to do so. If Israel believes that immediate preemption is required for its security, it will face the choice of (1) overriding its own armed forces' judgment on the military necessity of immediate preemption out of deference to its U.S. ally, whose Golan peacekeeping forces would be endangered in a war; or (2) rejecting the U.S. government's counsel of delay and thereby risking antagonism of its key ally (and endangerment of the U.S. Golan peacekeeping forces) at *precisely the moment*—the start of a war—when close bilateral cooperation is crucial.

In the absence of U.S. troops on the Golan, the difficulty of this choice and the risks of bilateral tension would be substantially less. If those troops suffered casualties in a war initiated by Israeli preemption, this would damage the U.S.-Israeli relationship, notwithstanding that Syria might be legally culpable for provoking the war.

In this regard, it is worth recalling an Israeli military preemption that occurred in 1981: the aerial attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor outside Baghdad. The Israeli government properly viewed that facility as an integral part of Saddam Hussein's effort to develop nuclear weapons. Israel had worked closely with the United States for years to block Iraq's nuclear-weapons program through diplomacy with Iraq's suppliers, and Israeli and U.S. officials agreed that Iraq's nuclear facility created a grave threat. Nonetheless, at the time, the United States condemned Israel's action as dangerously provocative, and joined in formal criticism of Israel by the UN Security Council. If Israel had asked for U.S. consent before the raid, it would not have received it.

Ten years afterward, however, on October 28, 1991, then-Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney acknowledged that the United States benefited greatly from that Israeli action: "There were many times during the course of the build-up in the Gulf and the subsequent conflict that I gave thanks for the bold and dramatic action that had been taken [by Israel] some ten years before."

Finding: *The presence of U.S. troops on the Golan would increase the likelihood of U.S. opposition to preemptive military action by Israel, no matter how urgent or well-advised. The standard American tendency to disapprove military action would be reinforced powerfully by solicitude for the U.S. peacekeepers. Hence, the effect of the U.S. deploy-*

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ment might be the opposite of that intended: it could reduce fear of Israeli preemption among potential Arab aggressors. By tending to embolden rather than deter those contemplating renewed aggression against Israel, this would tend to undermine any Syrian-Israeli peace agreement, decrease regional stability, and increase the risks of war.

Demonstrating U.S. Support

Even if U.S. peacekeeping forces on the Golan are not justified by their monitoring function or their contribution to deterrence of aggression, would they not serve as a symbolic demonstration of America's commitment to the Syrian-Israeli peace process?

Perhaps, but such a use of U.S. armed forces would make a point that no one doubts anyway. And it would make it in an extravagantly costly fashion. How important is it that the U.S. government offer another visible sign of its desire for Syrian-Israeli peace? The United States has championed the idea for decades. It has invested diplomatic capital in it. The United States was the prime mover behind the Madrid talks, which built on the American-led military success in the 1991 Persian Gulf war to inaugurate the first open and direct peace negotiations between Syria and Israel. If there is to be a peace treaty between the parties, it is likely to be signed at the White House. And U.S. financial resources will undoubtedly be tapped to shore up the peace arrangements. Under the circumstances, one cannot reasonably contend that U.S. forces on the Golan are required to demonstrate symbolically U.S. support for peace in the region.

***Finding:** As a general proposition, it is not sensible for the United States to make a commitment of indefinite duration to put U.S. troops on the Golan for symbolic purposes, when the necessary symbolism can (and undoubtedly will) be supplied amply by other means. Such a commitment would not be sensible even if the troops were to be stationed in a stable and safe environment. Given the dangers of terrorism in the region, and the political instabilities and risks of war, it would be very irresponsible to deploy those troops as symbols.*

Multilateral Force

It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that none of the major problems inherent in a U.S. peacekeeping force on the Golan would be solved through the use of a multilateral force in which U.S. troops would form a part. In fact, U.S. participation in a multilateral force would give rise to additional difficulties regarding command structures and international politics, especially if that force were under UN auspices. Israeli government officials have said that they do not want UN auspices for multilateral peacekeeping forces on the Golan, but, if the Clinton administration agrees to contribute to such forces, it may insist on a UN umbrella.

***Finding:** As the experience of UNPROFOR in Bosnia has demonstrated, multilateral peacekeeping contingents tend to become part of the problem. They feel constrained to try to appease those who pose the greatest threat to peace—if only to reduce the risks to their own personal safety as they operate in dangerous situations under severe force and firepower limitations. Frequently, such "peacekeepers" wind up tacitly allied with the aggressors, promoting a false moral equivalence between the latter and their victims. Such units simply cannot be relied upon to deter or defeat attacks against the more vulnerable party—in this case, Israel.*

Costs and Risks of Deploying U.S. Forces on the Golan

1. **Danger to U.S. Troops:** U.S. troops on the Golan Heights would face threats of terrorism and also the possible outbreak of war or low-level conflict. As Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres observed on October 5, 1994:

Syria is likely to attack Israel even if a peace agreement is reached, if extremist

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elements in Damascus are disappointed by it. It is likely that leaders will arise in Syria who will deploy anew their tanks and planes, and therefore we must be careful.

Because of the Golan's compact area and terrain, U.S. troops would be operating close to a substantial and potentially hostile population. They would be within range of Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations based in south Lebanon. The Syrian government has influence over Hezbollah and other active terrorist groups, but so do Iran and other states hostile to the United States. Even if Syria chose not to stimulate terrorist attacks against U.S. peacekeeping troops on the Golan, Iran, Iraq, Libya, or other states could find it convenient to do so, because the logistics of targeting U.S. forces on the Golan, in the immediate vicinity of south Lebanon, would be far easier than those required to hit U.S. forces elsewhere.

Also, U.S. forces on the Golan would have large, heavily equipped Syrian and Israeli armies, respectively, on either side of them and would be close (fewer than 50 miles) to Syria's capital, Damascus. (In contrast, U.S. elements of the Multilateral Forces and Observers [MFO][8] in the vast and virtually unpopulated Sinai are not stationed near cities, known terrorist bases, or likely lines of attack in any future Arab-Israeli wars.)

The history of American deployments in Lebanon and Somalia suggests to hostile local forces that, by killing some U.S. peacekeeping forces, one might compel the withdrawal of the U.S. contingent altogether. Senator Carl Levin (D-MI), a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, explained the syndrome on April 12, 1994: "Unless your vital interest is at stake, you are not going to be able to take American casualties for very long—*nor should we.*"[9] This has created an incentive for attacks on U.S. troops.

Finding: *Placing U.S. forces in proximity to Syrian population centers and to the south-Lebanon base areas of various terrorist organizations would enable hostile forces to attack those forces without Syria's having to take responsibility. When U.S. Marine Lieutenant Colonel Rich Higgins, serving in a UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, was killed in 1988 by terrorists there, the United States was unable to hold anyone in particular responsible—a point not lost on those who might threaten U.S. personnel deployed to the region in the future.*

2. Drawing on U.S. Defense Resources: As already noted above, it has been speculated that a U.S. peacekeeping deployment on the Golan might entail a token force of 800 or so troops. Experienced military officers appreciate, however, that any such contingent should be large enough and well-enough equipped to be able to defend itself effectively in the event of renewed hostilities. According to this view, if there is to be an American contingent on the Golan Heights, it should be a functioning unit, specifically an armored brigade—roughly 5,000 troops and their heavy equipment.

The size of the U.S. deployment thus represents a dilemma. A lightly-armed token force of approximately 800 troops would be more vulnerable in various respects than an armored brigade. If such troops were to suffer casualties, questions would inevitably arise as to whether a stronger force could have prevented the casualties. On the other hand, the United States might not be able to sustain the commitment of an armored brigade to a long-term Golan deployment.

To have a brigade in place on the Golan at all times would require the commitment of three times as many troops. At any given time, one brigade would be on site for a tour of approximately six-months' duration, one would be training and preparing to deploy, and one, having just rotated home, would be recovering and retraining for other missions. In other words, the equivalent of a full division would be required to sustain a brigade-size force on the Golan for any length of time.

Finding: *The Clinton administration's "Bottom-Up Review" plan, even assuming that there are budget resources adequate to implement it, contemplates maintaining only ten active-duty divisions in the entire U.S. Army force structure. It is difficult to imagine*

[8] The MFO is the multilateral peacekeeping force stationed in the Sinai peninsula under the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

[9] *National Journal*, April 23, 1994.

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that such a substantial part of the nation's total combat capability would be allocated to this purpose.

3. Unreliable Commitments: U.S. peacekeepers or monitors would not necessarily be maintained on the Golan during a crisis. As the administration's Bottom-Up Review states:

> If a second Major Regional Conflict (MRC) breaks out shortly after the first, we will need to pull together and deploy another building block of forces to assist our allies in the threatened area in halting and defeating the second aggressor. *The force for that effort would come from a further reallocation of overseas presence forces, any forces still engaged in smaller-scale operations, and most of the remaining forces based in the United States.* [Emphasis added]

The administration's National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, on February 6, 1994, implied that even a *single* major regional conflict could trigger such dislocation: "We [would not] hesitate to end our engagement in a peace operation if that were necessary to concentrate our forces against an adversary in a major conflict."

The open-ended nature of a commitment of U.S. troops for peacekeeping or monitoring is inherently problematic. Such a mission is never completed. U.S. flexibility to use those troops for another mission elsewhere would be constrained by vulnerability to the accusation that we have abandoned a commitment—and perhaps endangered the peace thereby.

Finding: *Peacekeeping and other "smaller-scale" operations, including a deployment on the Golan Heights, would have to be judged expendable if international crises arose and required reallocation of units and resources. A misunderstanding or lack of clarity on this point would damage U.S. credibility. The United States has an interest in ensuring that its Israeli allies realize that U.S. peacekeeping forces on the Golan might not be present at a time of tension in the future should they be required to fill a gap elsewhere.*

4. Deterring Friend or Foe?: There is danger that a U.S. Golan deployment might deter the wrong party. As discussed above, the United States could harm its own interests and damage regional stability by deploying peacekeeping forces whose effect would be to deter defensive Israeli military action rather than aggressive military action by Syria.

Yet senior Clinton-administration policy-makers seek to appeal to Arab interlocutors in the Middle East on precisely this score—by stressing America's singular ability to deter *Israeli* use of force. For example, Dennis Ross, the administration's Special Middle East Coordinator, has written:

> What has been overlooked for too long in America, but not in the Arab world, is that we are the only ones who can stop the Israelis in wartime. The specter of war may be lower now, but it has surely not disappeared, and the Arab world—especially the confrontation states—knows well that it has been the U.S. that pressured the Israelis to stop in every war. This alone provides a certain baseline in our relations with states like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. . . .[10]

Finding: *It would be neither in the U.S. interest, consistent with Israel's security, nor conducive to genuine stability in the Middle East to have U.S. forces serving in such a way as to deter not Syrian aggression but Israeli defense.*

5. Strained Relations: A U.S. "honest-broker" role as provider of peacekeeping forces on the Golan would likely strain relations between Israel and the United States in the event of tension between Syria and Israel. The United States and Israel are unlikely to react harmoniously to signs that Syria might be violating its treaty obligations or preparing an aggression. The presence of U.S. troops in the region would give the United States (1) an added incentive to urge restraint (perhaps undue restraint) upon Israel; (2) a greater claim for deference from Israel; and, therefore (3) greater

[10] "Acting With Caution: Middle East Policy Planning for the Second Reagan Administration," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1985, p.28.

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potential for a bitter falling-out in the event that Israel deemed it necessary to act inconsistently with U.S. wishes.

Such U.S. troops would have the effect of limiting the freedom of action of both the United States and Israel. Both allies derive benefits from the ability of each to take independent action for which the other need not bear responsibility. These benefits would be compromised by a U.S. deployment on the Golan. The obvious potential for the U.S. Golan force to strain relations between the United States and Israel would create an incentive for Syria to manufacture compliance crises and other situations of tension.

In connection with this point, we should recall the 1970 cease-fire agreement between Egypt and Israel which the Nixon administration brokered to end the so-called War of Attrition. Immediately after agreement was reached, Israeli military intelligence detected that Egypt was violating it by moving SA-2 and SA-3 air-defense missiles to the Suez Canal. U.S. intelligence clearly confirmed the violation. Nevertheless, after ten days of silence on the subject, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, announced that it was "impossible to prove or disprove Israeli charges about the missiles." Israel was dissuaded from taking military action against the new missile sites. After further study, the State Department confirmed "forward deployment of missiles by the Egyptians around the time the cease-fire went into effect," but stated that the evidence of continued missile movements after the deadline was "inconclusive." These missiles, which had been moved in violation of the cease-fire agreement, nevertheless remained in place. Three years later, they played an important role in denying the Israeli air force control of the skies over the Canal when Egypt crossed it as part of the surprise attack that launched the Yom Kippur War.

The United States would find it difficult to be both an "honest broker" and honest in monitoring Syrian compliance. With U.S. troops on the Golan, the United States would be reluctant to respond to Israeli intelligence-collection requests if doing so increased the possibility of Israeli preemption against Syria. And in any event the United States would be inclined to withhold information from Israel if providing it would lead Syria to accuse the United States of favoring Israel or of functioning on the Golan effectively as an arm of the IDF.

As an "honest broker," would the United States deem itself obliged to provide early-warning data to both parties? This would represent a quantum improvement in Syrian intelligence-collection capabilities, and negate a factor in Israel's "qualitative edge."

Finding: *Given their different interests and responsibilities, U.S. and Israeli intelligence officials could be expected to disagree about the conclusions to be drawn from data supplied by U.S. peace monitors. Policy-makers would similarly be likely not to see eye-to-eye. Such disagreements are most likely to occur—and be most intense—during periods of crisis, as was evident during the Gulf war.*

6. Adverse Repercussions with Syria: U.S. troops on the Golan would likely give rise to additional problems in the U.S. relationship with Syria. Syria could be expected to believe that Israel was benefiting disproportionately from intelligence produced by U.S. monitors. This might lead to terrorist or other attacks on U.S.-manned early-warning facilities.

Since such facilities also play an important part in providing combat command, control, and intelligence necessary for effective battle management, they are routinely targeted in the opening phases of any armed conflict. For example, the Syrian army in 1973 attacked Israeli early-warning sites on the Golan at the outset of the Yom Kippur War. It must be expected that they would do so again in the event of another war with Israel—particularly if the Syrians believed that the U.S. personnel associated with these facilities were providing information to the IDF.

Syria would want to use strains in its relations with the United States to induce U.S. officials to offer concessions to "keep Syria in the peace process." A skillful Syrian leader like Hafez al-Assad would play upon U.S. eagerness to preserve that process in order to strain the relationship between the United States and Israel. Dore Gold of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies believes Assad's desire to advance this objective may

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explain his apparent willingness to accept the substitution—at least temporarily—of American forces for Israeli forces on the Golan:

> The Arab states have aspired for years to weaken the "special relationship" between Israel and the United States. The stationing of a significant American force on the Golan is likely to serve as an efficient political instrument in the hands of Syria, to try to convert the U.S. from a close partner of Israel to an external superpower obligated to follow an evenhanded policy in order to protect its soldiers. This neutrality could find expression in the form of harsh American reactions to IDF actions in Lebanon (to the extent that peace did not entirely remove the security threats from this sector). And over time, American neutrality could also influence more central aspects of strategic cooperation between the U.S. and Israel, such as the supply of advanced weaponry."[11]

Finding: *Syria could be expected: (1) to exploit its position vis-à-vis U.S. forces on the Golan to dilute the U.S.-Israeli relationship, insisting that the United States act "evenhandedly" between Israel and Syria; and (2) to press the United States to wipe the slate clean on such bilateral problems as Damascus's continuing support for international terrorism, drug-trafficking, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and counterfeiting of U.S. currency.*

7. Damage to U.S. Public Support of Israel: Israel has always opposed relying on U.S. troops for its security. Its reasons have been sound, including a spirit of independence, an unwillingness to overburden an important ally, and the realization that in a war U.S. troops would arrive too late to save Israel, given its small size. Another reason is the essence of Zionism itself—Jewish self-reliance—combined with the lessons of the Holocaust, which showed that in the ultimate life-and-death crisis Jewry could not depend on salvation by others. All of this has served to win the admiration of Americans who appreciate an ally that does not desire or expect U.S. forces to defend it.

Two decades ago, Yitzhak Rabin stated the case against Israel's relying for its security on American forces. His remarks related to proposals for an American deployment in the Sinai:

> An Israel that got American soldiers involved in the Middle East would stand out in U.S. public opinion in a negative light. . . . I fear that when the time comes for a comprehensive arrangement in the Middle East, the Americans will propose their own military presence in exchange for extensive concessions on our part in the territories on the basis of the interim agreement. *No army is a substitute for the IDF for the protection of Israel's security.*[12] [Emphasis added]

Admiration for Israel's military self-reliance became a major strategic asset, which facilitated U.S. appropriation of substantial economic and military aid for Israel. There is importance in U.S. public support for Israel and danger in undermining it. If Israel insists upon a hazardous deployment of U.S. forces on the Golan, it can be expected to damage its standing with the U.S. public.

Finding: *If U.S. forces on the Golan were to suffer casualties—from terrorism, for example—there would be U.S. public pressure to end the Golan mission, and Israel's image as a self-reliant ally would be tarnished. Israeli anxieties about the reliability of the United States as a "peacekeeper" on the Golan would intensify, and with good reason. U.S. credibility would be at stake.*

The Sinai MFO and the Golan Mission

It has been suggested that U.S. peacekeeping forces on the Golan mission would create no more difficulties than has the U.S. contingent in the Multilateral Force and Observers in the Sinai. The risks of a Golan deployment, however, are significantly greater than those attending the Sinai mission.

First of all, there are important differences in geography, topography, and de-

[11] Gold, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[12] From Yitzhak Rabin's memoir, *Pinkas Sherut*, Volume II, pp. 484-85.

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mography between the Golan and Sinai. The Sinai is approximately 120 miles wide and has no appreciable population. As such it constitutes strategic depth for Israel even if it is not under Israeli control. By contrast, in the event of Israeli withdrawal, the narrow Golan Heights (to repeat, approximately 10 miles wide and 40 miles long) could be rapidly remilitarized by Syrian forces. It also contains and is accessible to substantial local populations that Syria has said it will augment after Israeli withdrawal. This means that risks of terrorism, under cover of the local population, exist on the Golan that do not exist in the Sinai.

Secondly, the Golan abuts south Lebanon, a major base for terrorist groups hostile to the United States. There is no analogous threat in the Sinai.

Thirdly, the Golan, as discussed above, has special strategic significance as a watershed. This could give rise to Israeli-Syrian conflicts, as in the past, that could lead to violence endangering U.S. peacekeepers. No similar problem exists in the Sinai.

Fourthly, the political relationship between Israel and Egypt is of a different nature from what exists now—or can be foreseen—between Israel and Syria. The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was based on a profound shift in Egypt's strategic orientation. Then-Egyptian President Anwar Sadat persuaded Israel's government and public that his government (or, at a minimum, Sadat himself) intended to make peace with Israel a cornerstone of Egypt's national-security policy. He completed Egypt's transition from the Soviet camp to the Western camp in global affairs and made Egypt a friend of the United States and a recipient of large amounts of U.S. aid. All of this tended to increase Israel's confidence in the security of its border with Egypt. It kept the Sinai largely free of tension and preserved the MFO from crises or dangers.

No one can reasonably assert that Assad has demonstrated a strategic reorientation similar to Sadat's. Assad's peace diplomacy has been grudging, not confidence-inspiring. Even if he ultimately signs a peace treaty, ample grounds will remain for doubting his sincerity. His record of compliance with international agreements is in general poor. He may view a treaty with Israel as nothing more a tactical maneuver to free Syria from isolation and other difficulties created for it by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Treaty or no, tensions between Israel and Syria will remain high for the foreseeable future and any Golan peacekeeping forces will be squeezed into a narrow area flanked by two heavily armed parties that remain hostile and mutually suspicious.

Lastly, the U.S.-Egyptian relationship is entirely different from that existing or foreseeable between the United States and Syria. Israel aside, the United States has a list of grievances against the Syrian government relating, for example, to support for terrorist organizations, the illicit narcotics trade, the occupation of Lebanon, subversion of the Republic of Turkey, strategic cooperation with Iran, and gross abuse of human rights in Syria. Tensions between Syria and the United States would not end simply because Syria signed a treaty with Israel, even if the United States sponsored the treaty-signing and worked to improve its ties with Syria afterward. The many and deep issues that divide Syria and the United States would create dangers for U.S. forces on the Golan that do not exist for U.S. forces in the Sinai MFO.

Finding: *The differences between the Golan and Sinai situations are very substantial. U.S. troops on the Golan would have a truly dangerous mission in a high-tension region. They would face threats from terrorists in Syria and Lebanon and would be caught in the middle of heavily armed forces in the event of renewed hostilities. None of these dangers faces U.S. troops in the Sinai MFO.*

The New Factor

For decades—to stress the point once again—the Israeli government has opposed the idea of Israel's relying on U.S. troops for its security. This position has been formulated categorically and held virtually universally in politically relevant circles. It has always been based on the arguments set forth above: Israel is more secure, its enemies more effectively deterred, its relationship with the United States stronger—if Israel relies solely on the IDF for its defense.

Why then does the Israeli government now propose to have U.S. troops stationed on

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the Golan? Does it no longer subscribe to its longstanding analysis of the virtues of self-reliance? Have Israel's leaders changed their minds on the substance of the issue?

Israel's leaders do not appear to have changed their minds fundamentally on the virtue and necessity of national military self-reliance. What is new is that Israel's leaders are planning to do something which only few previously could ever have imagined: relinquishing Golan territory to the Assad government at a time when the Israeli public is profoundly split on the issue.

For many Israelis across the political spectrum, Israeli withdrawal from the Golan has been unthinkable since 1967. Even those who considered it "thinkable" must have imagined that it would happen only if a dramatic Sadat-in-Jerusalem type of breakthrough occurred in Syria's relationship with Israel. But no such breakthrough has occurred and Israeli public opinion is skeptical.

Israeli officials who favor a U.S. troop presence on the Golan after an Israeli withdrawal believe it will help assuage the fears of their public. They evidently think that such influence on public opinion takes precedence over the longstanding substantive policy of opposing such a role for U.S. troops. Whether U.S. troops on the Golan would, in fact, significantly affect Israeli public opinion regarding an Israeli withdrawal is not clear.

Finding: *The U.S. government must give serious thought to whether it is wise to make an indefinite commitment of U.S. troops to a dangerous and ill-defined mission in order to attempt, in the short term, to influence Israel's domestic debate about the risks and opportunities relating to a peace agreement with Syria. However much the U.S. government favors the peace policy of the Israeli government, there are strong grounds for resisting this kind of misapplication of U.S. military resources. Nor is it in the U.S. interest that the Israeli public mistakenly believe that U.S. peacekeeping troops on the Golan would enhance Israeli security.*

IV. Conclusion

THERE is no mission or rationale for a U.S. peacekeeping force on the Golan that would justify the resulting costs and risks. Indeed, the net effect could be negative for Israel's security and regional stability, while the consequences could include the loss of U.S. lives and, possibly, a credibility-damaging retreat of the U.S. forces under terrorist fire. In any event, such a deployment would increase the danger of direct U.S. involvement in a future Middle East war and undermine Israel's standing with the U.S. public as a self-reliant ally.

If Israel withdraws on or from the Golan, it will be required to adopt measures to compensate to the extent possible for the military risks inherent in relinquishing the territory. It will have to consider: investment in more surveillance assets; higher sustained readiness for air and other forces; a larger standing army; and means and methods to increase the speed of military mobilization. All such measures entail large costs—political and societal as well as financial. A U.S. force deployment to the Golan would not significantly reduce those costs. Indeed, one of the dangers of such a deployment is that it may create a false sense of security in Israel and discourage the investments necessary to address such risks. This would not serve U.S. interests, much less Israel's.

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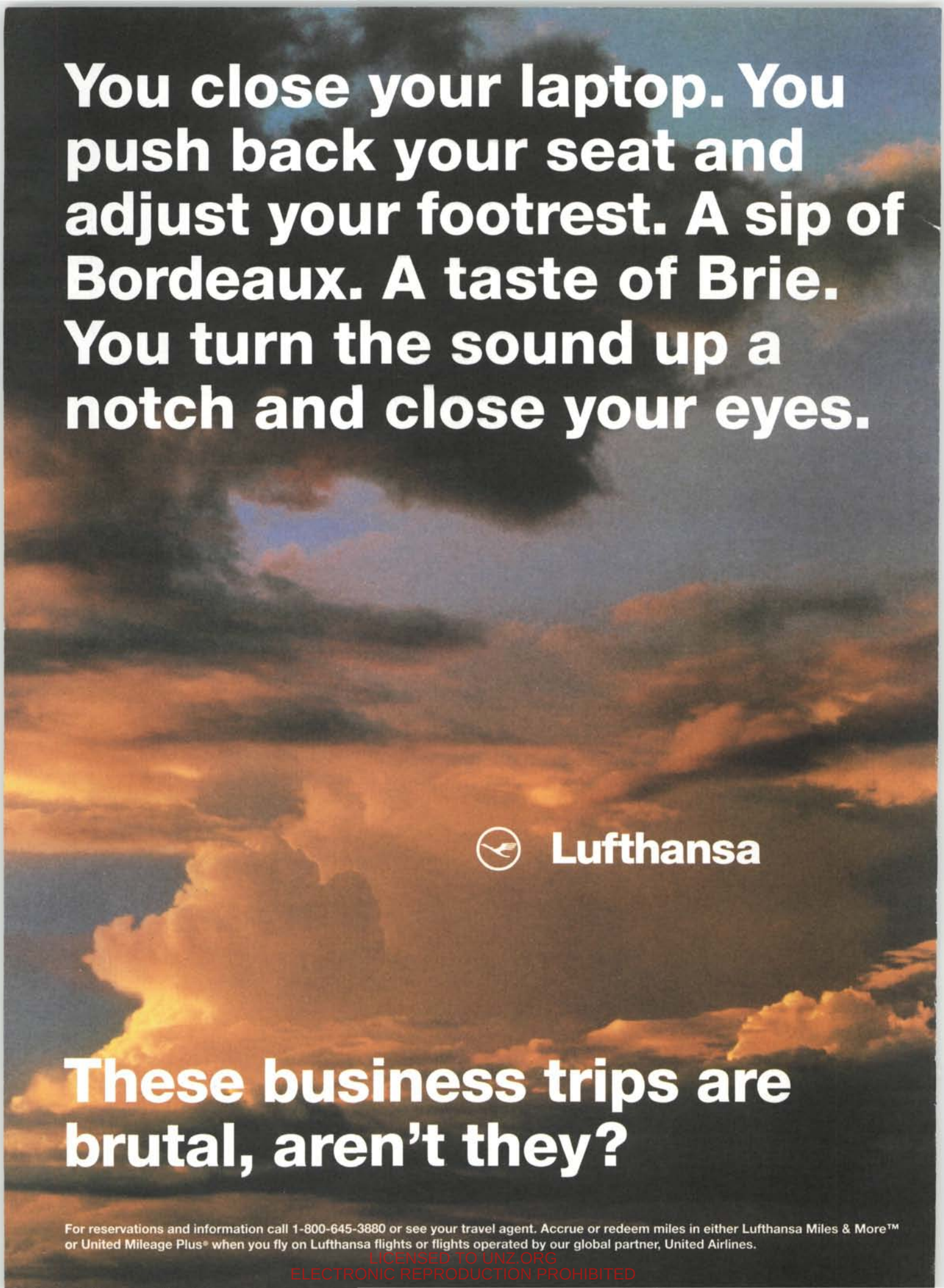
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